

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

Vol. XII

APRIL, 1904

No. 4

CONTENTS

The Notorious Sir Charles Gratwicke	Baroness von Hutten	1
The Bold Ghost	Louise Chandler Moulton	36
The Last Ditch	Ruth Kimball Gardiner	37
Flora in Urbe	Reginald Wright Kauffman	42
The Woman in Possession	Richard Le Gallienne	43
"O Perfumed Night, and Love, and Thou!"	Montagu Lessing	53
Fable of the Love-sick King	Erwin Heyden	54
The Story of Old Mother Hubbard	William C. de Mille	55
Twilight	John Vance Cheney	56
A Bystander	Bliss Carman	57
The Rose of a Dear Desire	Emery Pottle	59
A Coquette	Julian Durand	66
Gold	Temple Bailey	67
Renunciation	Carolyn Wells	72
The Maxims of Methuselah	Geleti Burgess	73
The King's Highway	Meribah Philbrick Abbott	75
A Rose Sonnet—With Thorns	Felix Carmen	76
They That Go Down in Storms	Harriet L. Huntington	77
The Lenten Lover	S. Decatur Smith, Jr.	83
The Spiders	Hilton R. Greer	84
A Crucified Venus	Zona Gale	85
The Masculine View	Madeline Bridges	95
Ricordatevi Di Me!	George Allan England	96
The Fog of Dreams	Theodosia Garrison	97
O Fairies, Cannot You?	Louise Betts Edwards	100
Jane Scoggin's Choice	R. K. Munkittrick	110
In Praise of the Sword	Maurice Maeterlinck	111
First Love	McCrea Pickering	114
An Amateur Judgment Day	Eleanor A. Hallowell	115
Musiques d'Automne	Vicomte Jacques de Beauport	120
A Question of Honor	Ruth Milne	121
Hassan and Hassoun	Clinton Scollard	125
Through the Window	Elsa Barker	126
Mrs. Redefers's Rubies	Zinn Gould	127
Dear-and-Lost	William Young	130
A Comedy of Love	Una Hudson	131
Held Back	Fanny Kemble Johnson	135
The Faun	John Winwood	136
The Victim of a Rescue	Elliott Flower	137
L'Honnête Enlèvement	Henry Fevre	143
In Sabine Meadows	William Coffin Dornin, Jr.	145
Fiddle-de-Dee	Cy Warman	146
A Question	Lilian Quiller-Couch	147
The Dream	Virginia Woodward Cloud	150
A Pseudo-Madonna	Eleanor Talbot Kinhead	151
Resignation	Mabel Earle	158
The Useless Tears	Zoe Anderson-Norris	159
The Monster	Edwin L. Sabin	160

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$2.50

SINGLE COPIES 25 CENTS

The entire contents of this magazine are protected by copyright, and must not be reprinted

Entered at New York Post-Office as second-class mail matter

Issued Monthly by Ess Ess Publishing Company, 452 Fifth Avenue, New York

*The May number of THE SMART SET will contain:
"Veronica's Lovers," by G. B. Burgin*

Copyright 1904 by
ESS ESS PUBLISHING COMPANY

*Among the other contributors to the May number will be : Maurice Francis Egan, Bertha Runkle, Arthur Stringer,
Julia C. R. Dorr, Madison Cawein, Elizabeth Duer and Emery Pottle*

WILLIAM GREEN, Printer, New York

THE NOTORIOUS SIR CHARLES GRATWICKE

By the Baroness von Hutten

VINCENZO GRIMALDI stood in the door of his Alpine inn, and watched, with the sublime indifference of familiarity, the splendid sunset glow on the snow-peaks that enclosed the narrow valley.

It was an evening in late June, one of those days, clear and perfect as a crystal cup, that seem intended to be filled to the brim with the joy of living.

But there had been little joy in the day for the handsome mountaineer. His face wore a look of sullen discontent, and, as the rosy light began to fade, leaving the snowy heights white and chill-looking, he turned, and called, petulantly:

"Adalgisa! Adalgisa! An apoplexy on the woman! Where is she?"

"I am here, *carissimo*, in the balcony above thy head."

He craned his neck upward. "Ouf! Framed in like that against the sky—thou art ugly, my soul, but ugly!"

"Yes, I am ugly. Thou art beautiful, 'Cenzino, my treasure, and I am useful. Thou wilt admit that I am useful?"

There was not a trace of offense in her voice, nothing but an anxious longing for approval, and a great tenderness.

He was so splendid, the soft-eyed Adonis in the velvet jacket, and he had had the inexpressible goodness and condescension to marry her, Adalgisa Berroni, fifteen years his senior and as hideous as the miracle-working black Madonna in the church on the hill.

Grimaldi laughed, not unkindly. "*Sì, sì*, thou art useful, my dear. Come down, and let us talk a bit. If those pigs of travelers continue not to come, what are we to do?"

She ran down the stone stairs, her wooden shoes clattering noisily into the evening light.

"They will come, my soul, they will come! Have I not the letter? And they are English. Think how the *milordo* with the glass in his eye paid last year. And think how he ate! A huge appetite in travelers is a gift of God to the poor innkeepers."

She sat down on the green bench by the door, and folded her small dark hands on her apron.

Travelers in the Italian Alps know that cleanliness is by no means to be found in every day's journey. The inns and hotels lying at all outside of the beaten track are too apt to be dirty, dark, and full of fleas, to which lively little eccentricities of nature many people are foolish enough to object. Therefore, the Regina d'Italia, the comfortable old hostelry lying on a small plateau overhanging the beautiful valley of the Bollente, is known to many travelers as a veritable oasis in a desert, and, as a rule, is, from the first of May until the first of September, as full as it can be. Beppe, the old *vetturino* from the railway station, two hours away, invariably told his fares, as he drove them slowly up the winding road to the Regina: "The rooms waiting for the *signori* were vacated only this morning!—by an

English *milordo*," the old man always added, with a nod that shook the brass rings in his ears, "who gave me five *franchi* when he went away!"

But this year, for some reason, luck had gone against the Regina d'Italia. June was nearly over, and but one guest was in the house. Others had come and gone, to be sure, but they were of the unprofitable kind—a German professor, who gave very small tips and refused to pay extra for the huge number of raw eggs he consumed; a poor curé from Perugia, who had occupied the humblest room in the house; one or two Italian families, who spent the night only; and a party of students from Bologna, who drank too much wine and broke two windows. These had formed the month's clientèle, and not only the mercurial Vincenzo was depressed, but even Adalgisa, she of the brave heart and cheery tongue, began to be discouraged.

Then, the day before, a letter had come—one of those letters written in bad Italian, that she had learned to love, because they meant "*Inglese*"—ordering four rooms for that evening. A bottle of old Barolo was at once opened, in honor of the good news, and Adalgisa had flown about all day, with Teresa, the maid—also, incidentally, her sister—airing the beds, washing and oiling the already immaculate brick floors, and preparing a great many wonderful things to eat for the supposedly hungry travelers who—didn't come!

There was no letter, no telegram, to announce a change of plan or a postponement. Cecilia Ffoulke and her party simply did not arrive.

Adalgisa had had a bad evening, for Vincenzo was very angry with her for disappointing him.

He was angry about the loss of money involved, but quite as angry because he was bored to death with only the quiet, red-headed artist in the house, and longed for new people to whom he could show off his beautiful manner. He loved the rôle that his marriage with the heiress of the

old house had brought him; it was his delight to play the attentive host, resplendent in the dazzling white shirts that Adalgisa starched and ironed so beautifully for him. He enjoyed the admiration called forth by his handsome eyes and splendid teeth; he was ceremonious, a little curious, very friendly, a trifle childlike. In a word, that adorable Vincenzo, as he was often called, knew, without ever having heard the word, how to make himself picturesque, while Adalgisa managed the accounts, did the cooking, and kept the house in its renowned condition of beautiful cleanliness. The division of labor was perfectly satisfactory to them both.

Adalgisa, in spite of the grimness of her homely little dark face, and the fierce eyebrows that nearly met over her big nose, had a sense of humor, and often laughed quietly to herself, as she heard her husband making himself charming to his guests. But, though she laughed, she adored him, and this beautiful June evening her heart ached for his disappointment.

"*Canaglia!*" he snarled, at length, drawing aside, to let pass a tall girl with splendid red hair, who came out with a sketching-block under her arm. "Good evening, *signorina*. The English are all *canaglia*. It's I who always say so, but you must needs make such a fuss about them. Eaters of raw meat!"

"Well, Vincenzo, when they do come, you will admit that they pay well. One adds one-fourth to every item, and they never object. Besides," she went on, looking at the girl with the red hair, who had sat down on the low stone wall overlooking the valley, "I am sure they will come. I dreamed last night about a white cat. What's that?"

From the valley came a strange, uncanny noise, as of some hoarse beast puffing and growling. It drew nearer. "Madonna! What is it?"

Vincenzo turned pale, and Adalgisa ran across the terrace, peering down through the olives that hid the road. "Don't be frightened, Sor Vin-

cenzo," remarked the girl, turning to the innkeeper, with a contemptuous smile, "it is not the devil. It is only an automobile."

"I thought it was one. I was on the point of saying so," the man answered, wiping the moisture from his forehead. "I have read of them." He crossed the terrace, and stood by the two women.

As the automobile struggled up the last bit of the steep road and came to a standstill, Adalgisa gave a little cry of delight. "*Mah!* It is the *milordo* of last year!"

The two men in the auto laughed and raised their caps. "*Buona sera!* How are you, Vincenzo? *Signora!*"

As they got out and came toward the ecstatically smiling and bobbing pair, the red-headed girl turned and walked quietly toward the door leading to the garden behind the inn. Her pale face, oddly flushed on the high cheek-bones, was a little set, her long eyes half closed.

"Mademoiselle!"

The younger of the two new-comers, a boyish-looking man of twenty-seven, had followed her, and held out his hand.

"Won't you speak to me? I—I am so glad to see you."

"How do you do?" she returned, without looking at him. "Are you to be here long?"

"Am I to be here—why?"

"Because, if you are, I must go. That is all."

He drew back, hurt.

"I say, you are unkind. I don't think I deserve that from you."

She shook her head, impatiently. "You deserve nothing, good or bad, from me, nor I from you, Lord Welter. Please let me go now."

He watched her as she went slowly down the path, through the neglected rose-trees, and then, with a sigh, returned to his friend, who was steering the auto into the stable, to the indignation of a donkey, a blind horse, and some shrilly protesting fowls.

"That your girl?" The older man came out into the light, and took off his hat.

"My girl! It's Mademoiselle Zoloff, if that's what you mean."

"Don't be cross, my dear boy. Fine hair."

"Fine hair! I say, Charlie, I'm perfectly wretched."

"I know. Well—why? Wasn't she glad to see you?"

They had sat down at a table near the door, and Vincenzo was rushing in and out, bearing table-cloth, glasses, knives and forks.

"She'd hardly speak to me," Welter returned, flushing a deep red, half with anger.

"Did you tell her that we came on purpose to see her? that we came up roads never before trodden by—automobile?"

The elder man took out a battered cigar-case, and began to smoke. He was a slight man with dark hair and heavy, gray-green eyes.

"I had no time to tell her anything—and you needn't chaff."

"Barolo, Eccellenza? Or Chianti vecchio?" Vincenzo, his serviette on his arm, stood at attention.

"Chianti. But *old*, mind you."

Welter's Italian was very bad, but Vincenzo understood, and disappeared with an all-comprehensive gesture.

"Sorry, Hal. I didn't mean to chaff. What are you going to do?"

Welter shook his head.

"I don't know. She said that, if I stayed, she'd go. That sounds pretty determined, doesn't it?"

"Very—particularly so from an ex-governess to a peer of the realm. And you think she liked you while she was with your sister?"

The younger man leaned across the table.

"I know she did, Gratwicke! Even Carry noticed it. You know, that was what caused the row."

"H'm. And you let her be sent off, without a protest? That was a mistake, if you wanted to marry her."

"That's just it! I was such a confounded young ass that—I didn't exactly want to marry her. I thought I'd forget all about her. You see?"

Gratwicke's green eyes darted a keen look at him.

"And, then, you *didn't* forget all about her, eh?"

"No. I couldn't. And, when I ran across her here, last Summer, I asked her to marry me, slap off the reel, and she refused. Her aunt tried to make her say yes, but she shut herself up in her room until I promised to go. Then she told me that she never would marry me, and I went down to the lakes."

His smooth young face was full of misery as he finished. The macaroni *al sago* lay neglected on his plate.

"It was awfully good of you to come, Gratwicke," he said, after a pause, "but it is no use."

Gratwicke looked past him.

"Hello, here's a carriageful of people coming. What a bore!"

A second later, as the carriage came into full view, he added, under his breath, "The devil!" And Welter, forgetting his woes in youth's splendid enjoyment of a joke, burst out laughing.

II

THE carriage, clumsy, and covered with dust, contained four people besides the coachman. One of the women, obviously a maid, got out at once and helped the others to descend, while the one man of the party, a small, rosy-faced clergyman, jumped out the other side, and, running around the carriage, stood watching the bows and gesticulations of Vincenzo, with tolerant amusement in his blue eyes.

"This is luck, Cissy!" Gratwicke had risen, and lounged slowly across the terrace, a malicious gleam under his heavy eyelids.

"Oh! *You* here!" The lady addressed gave a little scream, and then held out her hands. "Luck! My dear Char, I am delighted! I had no idea you were in this part of the world! Who's that with you? Oh, Cynthia, let me introduce a very old friend of mine—Miss Carey—Stone,

don't let that brigand touch my bag! You *know* it has my jewels in it. Ah, yes—let me introduce you to Bishop Carey, too."

The little clergyman shook hands cordially with the Englishman, and made some remark in a voice which was neither loud, nor nasal, nor anything else particularly distinctive, but it nevertheless proved him at once to be an American.

Gratwicke liked him, and, looking at his daughter, as she walked to the wall and stood gazing at the view, he liked her, too.

Welter, who had not risen, did so as the little party passed into the house, and was introduced. Then, when the two men, once more alone, watched the slim figure in the well-cut gray gown turn and follow the others, he said, meditatively:

"Nice-looking girl. The kind of girl who might be one's sister. I mean, so many American girls would do for one's wife, but so few for one's sister. You know what I mean."

"Yes. Hurry up and drink your wine, Welter; let's have a wash and then go for a tramp, so they can have their supper in peace."

III

A FEW minutes later, the bishop, his daughter and Mrs. Ffoulke sat together at the table deserted by the two men.

"Isn't it funny that Welter and Charley Gratwicke should turn up in this absurd little place?"

Mrs. Ffoulke helped herself to omelet as she spoke, and cast a quick glance from under her skilfully darkened eyelashes at her companions.

The bishop started.

"Gratwicke! Not the notorious Sir Charles Gratwicke?"

"The same. Are you horrified? I am very fond of him, bishop. He and I are old friends."

Cynthia laid down her fork, and turned her wide, brown eyes full on Mrs. Ffoulke.

"You can call *that* man your friend? The man who—who *killed* that poor Logan girl!"

Cissy laughed.

"La, la! That story wasn't true, my dear, though most of the others are. He did sell his family portraits like thingumbob in the play, and he did nearly kill Prince Schwalbach-Nauheim, but as to the Logan story——"

"It *is* true," broke in the young girl, indignantly; "a friend of mine was stopping in the house at the time, and I know all about it! They were engaged, everybody knew it. She, Effie Logan, I mean, wore his ring, and—and then one day, a letter came for him—no, it was a telegram—at breakfast, and he simply left the room without a word of explanation, and an hour later he had left the house! Nelly said he went to Paris to see some actress—Rose Trevor, wasn't it?"

"So the story goes. As a matter of fact, however, poor Charlie tried his best to marry the girl—who was freckled and hideous, and simply couldn't. She was *too* awful."

"Nelly says she was a *dear*! Not that that makes any difference! He behaved horribly, and poor Effie died from sorrow."

Her smooth young face was flushed, and her eyes almost black with excitement.

"There is no need for you to lose your head, my Donna Quixote," the bishop remarked; "your having seen him doesn't make him any the worse."

"But, papa, you do think him a wicked man?"

The bishop hesitated, his kindly face troubled.

"We are not his judges, dear," he said, at length.

Cissy watched them, curiously. Her ruse to arrange a meeting with Gratwicke had been so successful that she was distinctly grateful to the bishop for being so easy to manage, but, at the same time, it lay in her nature to more than half despise him for his gullibility.

When, two days before, she had read in the *Alpine Guide* that the dis-

tinguished English sport, "Sir Gratwicke," had determined to go up the valley of the Bollente in his automobile, she had at once known that this evening would bring him to the Regina d'Italia, of which inn she had heard his companion, Lord Welter, speak in the most enthusiastic terms. Then she had suggested to her American table-d'hôte acquaintances, the bishop and his daughter, a little drive in the mountains, and, after a pretended weighing of the desirabilities of several routes, she had at length turned the scale in favor of the valley of the Bollente, where, she remembered having heard, there was a very good inn.

And now she was here, and Gratwicke was here, and she would have at least two days with him. For the bishop might plan to go on the next morning, but she could easily prevent the carrying out of his project, even if obliged to fall back on the time-honored pretext of a bad headache.

It was very beautiful there on the terrace in the gathering gloaming. The bishop, who was blessed with that most comforting quality, an inborn love of nature, took off his hat, and leaned back comfortably in his place, his gentle eyes fixed on the splendid scene before him. Cynthia and Mrs. Ffoulke walked to the wall and sat down on it, looking over the olives into the valley.

"It is a beautiful evening, Cynthia, isn't it?"

The young girl nodded.

"Yes. But I think there is going to be a storm. It is very sultry, and look at that bank of clouds."

"It is possible. However, I don't care. It will clear the air for to-morrow. My head aches a little."

"I am sorry. Mrs. Ffoulke, tell me, why do you like Sir Charles Gratwicke? I mean, how can you?"

"Rather, how can I not like him!" The elder woman repressed a sigh as she spoke. "I have known him for years, Cynthia; and I always liked him. He is—lovable."

"Lovable! That is a word to apply

to a dear little child! I remember Nelly Coleman's mother was furious that Nell had even met him!—at Mr. Logan's, I mean. She said he was not fit to know a decent girl. That is saying a great deal."

"Don't you be a prig, my dear!" returned Mrs. Ffoulke, with a shrug. "He has been very fast, of course, and the affair with Rose Trevor has been most—unfortunate, but that was broken off long ago, and—I know plenty of women who would marry him like a shot, if he'd ask them."

There was a certain grimness in her voice as she spoke.

"He has so much charm. Ah, so much!"

"Charm, has he? I should have thought the other one, Lord Welter, had more charm," answered the girl, thoughtfully.

"Oh, Welter! Welter's a goose, a good-natured goose. He made a fool of himself over his sister's governess three or four years ago, and he's been behaving like an idiot ever since. Carry, his sister, had to get rid of the girl on his account. If you like his sort!"

Cynthia flushed.

"I didn't say I liked his sort, Mrs. Ffoulke. Ah, here comes some one. What perfectly glorious hair!"

A girl in a black frock came through the garden door, and walked slowly to the house.

"Isn't it lovely!" went on Cynthia.

"She has been crying," commented Cissy, with the curiosity so strongly characteristic of her. "I wonder who she is."

When Welter and Gratwicke came back from their walk, they found the two women still sitting on the wall in the dusk. Gratwicke, with his half-bored instinct to avoid Cissy, began talking to Miss Carey, and Cissy, much against her will, was marched off by the younger man into the garden, where he had still a faint hope of finding Made-moiselle Zoloff.

"Have you known Cissy Ffoulke long?" Gratwicke asked.

"No; only a day or two, at San Franceschino, you know. She is very nice, isn't she?"

"Charming. And you brought her with you? That was delightful for her."

"Oh, no! As a matter of fact, I think she proposed the trip. She knew about the hotel. It really is charming, isn't it?"

Gratwicke laughed, amusedly. He understood.

"Yes, delightful."

He liked the width between her eyes, the breadth of her brow, the lines of her mouth. She was less pretty than many young girls, but there was a freshness, an innocence about her that pleased him. And her figure, in her gray gown, was well molded and not too thin. Most American girls, he reflected, are too thin. Why didn't Welter give up that absurd red-headed Russian and marry this nice girl, about whom he could find out everything?

He sighed.

Cynthia did not make conversation. She was tired from her long drive, and the quiet and the beauty of the scene before her made her very silent. Gratwicke watched her and the landscape. There was a peace about them both.

At length, she turned.

"I must go in now. Good night."

She gave him her hand, and then went on, a slight note of embarrassment in her voice: "Lord Welter, will you do me a favor?"

"I—but——"

"It is only this. I have a friend who was stopping with the Logans at the time when Sir Charles Gratwicke—went away so suddenly—you know—and I know all about it. Nelly was a great friend of poor Effie Logan's. We go on to Agnamera to-morrow, but I do not wish to meet Sir Charles Gratwicke. I have—I have a very bad temper, and I know I'd be rude to him. Please do not introduce him to me. That is all."

Gratwicke dropped her hand, and gave a short laugh.

"That is all? Very well. I will not introduce any one to you. Good night."

She went in, and he stood still for a time, smiling, not quite pleasantly, at the memory of her childish request. Youth's serious way of taking itself is amusing, but it is disagreeable to find one's self outside the pale of its foolish and charming sympathies.

When Mrs. Ffoulke joined him a little later, her regular face, the carving of which had given her for years the title of a beauty, a little pale, he turned on her with something like a snarl.

"You really are an idiot, Cissy, to come here. Don't you realize that every one in London will hear of it in no time?"

"Hear of it? Of what? Why should I not come here as well as any one else?—as you, for instance?"

"Just as you like!" with a shrug; "only, you know perfectly well what they'll say."

"What is it that's written over the gate of the Aberdeen University? 'They say? What do they say? Let them say!'"

"Good. I, for one, have no more to say. Well, what's the news?" He turned, and, leaning against the wall, smiled at her.

He was so used to having her be in love with him that his attitude was much that of a woman toward a pertinacious adorer. That there was good in her, he knew; and her unselfish championing of him through all the years he had known her, her steady affection, lasting and surviving through all the shocks his mad conduct had given it, touched him in a way, though, naturally, it rather bored him. Woman-nature and man-nature are so much alike.

He listened while she gave him a short sketch of her tour with her cousin, whom she had left at San Franceschino, but showed no particular interest until she mentioned having had a letter from a friend in Trento.

"Ah!" he said, shortly, but she saw that he had felt the touch.

"Trevor is there," she went on, playing with her rings as she spoke.

"I know."

"Charlie—are you going on to Trento?"

He laughed.

"I don't know."

"That is your worst fault—your very worst. 'I don't know!' You never decide anything for yourself. You let chance decide. It is horrible!"

"Tut, tut! What vehemence! It is too great a nuisance to make up one's mind——"

"And it is weakness to let others make it up for one! Oh, it is, I know. If she chooses to take it into her head that she'd like to see you, you'd go, wouldn't you?"

"Yes," he returned, very slowly.

"And, if she doesn't, you will waste the Summer roaming about with Harry. Oh, it is enough to drive one mad!"

"Don't let it drive you mad, Cissy," he said, not unkindly, laying his hand on her arm. "It's really not good enough, you know."

After a pause, he went on, slowly:

"I've been thinking of writing you. You know about what. I am such a poor thing—weak, as you say, and worse than weak—I doubt if I ever marry, and if I do—" He broke off, and lighted a cigarette with nervous fingers.

"And if you do, it—will not be me," she added, in a curious, strained voice.

"It is awfully good of you to—to stick to me as you have done, Cissy. You were my only friend for a long time, but—it's only fair to tell you—I can't do it."

"Very well, Charlie. If you can't, you can't. I'd have done all I could to help you, and as to my money—I am sorry, and there's an end to that."

She laughed, but her eyes hurt him.

"I say, Cissy, you don't know how I hate to—to—you have always been good to me, and, by God! I'm not ungrateful—Steady!" he broke off, quickly. "Some one is coming."

It was a peasant with a telegram.

Cissy, to whom he brought it, looked at the address and gave it back to the messenger.

"Go to the inn," she said, adding, as she shook hands hastily with Gratwicke, "for some Russian—Zoloff. Good night, Charlie. We'll be friends, at any rate, won't we?"

IV

GRATWICKE, who, when in town, slept, or at least remained in bed, until noon, took a curious delight, when in the country, in rising at dawn. He liked the loneliness of the early morning hours when the few people he did meet were so busily engaged in their work that they hardly noticed him, and when, in his interest in the wakening of the day, he sometimes for a while forgot to notice himself.

On the morning after his arrival at the Regina d'Italia he rose while it was still dark, and, dressing quickly, went down into the chill mountain air. The sky above the high peaks behind the house was beginning to whiten, but it would be a long time before the sunlight could reach the valley. There was no one about, but a light in an upper window at the back of the house showed that some one would soon come.

Gratwicke opened the door leading to the garden, and penetrated into the dewy waste, in which the white and pink roses shone ghostlike in the gloom, and where the scent of sleeping heliotrope hung heavy under the cypresses. The mossy paths were soft to the feet, as the air to the nostrils; and the quiet of it was grateful to the notorious Sir Charles Gratwicke, who walked about, looking sometimes at the now visible peaks on his right, sometimes at the roses that still hung sleepy on their stems.

The memory of his interview with Cissy Ffoulke recurred to him every now and then, bringing an impatient frown to his eyes. It had been very painful, but, as she had let him see quite frankly, for some time past,

what it was that she wanted, it had seemed to him to be better to tell her at once that her hopes could never be fulfilled. He had a keen sense of humor, and the absurd side of the situation did not escape him. A woman who could deliberately try to marry a man who, she knew, was not in love with her, merited a certain amount of ridicule, and yet, as he had said to her, Cissy had been a real friend to him, and he had hated to hurt her.

And if he ever should marry—which he probably would not, as he was very poor and had the worst reputation in England, except that of Bertie Branscombe, who did not keep his word of honor even—he acknowledged to himself, with a little grimace at the absurdity of his pretensions, that nothing but the best would do for him. The future Lady Gratwicke must be a young girl—an innocent-minded young girl, carefully brought up, well-bred, well educated, very rich—at this point he burst out laughing. It was so absurd!

He looked up to see, standing near him and watching him with amused curiosity, the red-headed Russian, as he called her mentally. He raised his hat, and was about to turn down the pathway from her, when, to his surprise, she said, coolly:

"Good morning, Sir Charles Gratwicke!"

"Good morning, Miss Zoloff! So we know each other!"

"I suppose Lord Welter told you my name. I, of course, know who you are. In fact, I saw you once at Salton-on-Sea."

"Indeed? I fear I do not remember——"

"Of course you do not. I, as Lady Hawtrey's governess, remember you, however. You were sitting on the sand with Mrs. Trevor. She was very handsome in those days."

He looked her full in the face.

"She is still very handsome, don't you think?"

"Oh, yes, in a way. But she was thirty-six then, and she is forty-one

now. A difference. She has gone off, and she paints too much in the daytime."

Gratwicke was taken aback by her aplomb. The story of his connection with the great beauty was so well known to every one that people were very careful about referring to her before him; even his few men friends, after one or two outbursts of his famous temper, approached the subject gingerly. And here was this insignificant young woman, this ex-governess, who had been dismissed from kind-hearted Lady Hawtrey's service because of her evident penchant for Lady Hawtrey's young brother, not only talking about Rose Trevor in the coolest way, but also measuring him with a half-malicious eye, and quite evidently enjoying herself!

"All actresses paint too much after a time," he said, carelessly. "Why are you tormenting Welter?"

The girl started.

"I? Tormenting Lord Welter? I don't know what you mean."

He laughed. The goad had changed hands now.

"Oh, yes, you do. You know perfectly well. As to me, I know because he told me. As a matter of fact, we came here—a good bit out of our way—on purpose to find you."

The look of helpless confusion that had come to her face made her look years younger.

"I—he had no right to tell. And you—you—"

"I have no right to meddle in your affairs? That is true. I did it, frankly, because you deserved it for meddling in mine, but now, for some reason, I am sorry I did it."

"I didn't want to torment him. I am so sorry for him, Sir Charles—"

She clasped her hands, and looked at him, piteously.

"Please take him away."

Gratwicke's anger had quite gone, leaving in its stead the absurd pity he so often felt to an almost overwhelming degree for people in reality much less unhappy than himself.

"I can take him away, but I can't

make him happy. You could make him happy. Why don't you?"

"I can't marry him, can I, when I don't love him?" She drew a deep breath, and looked at him with a return of spirit.

He saw that her frock was very shabby, and her boots the work of some village cobbler.

"No," he agreed, slowly, picking a rose and shaking the dew from it into his hand. "But—are you sure that you don't love him?"

"Sir Charles, you are very impertinent—"

And, trying to annihilate him, she succeeded only in awakening in him a perfect passion of sympathy.

"Look here," he said, almost roughly, "this isn't the time of day for lying. Look at the sunlight on the snow! I am a pretty poor specimen of humanity, and I am powerless to help you in any worldly way, but I see that you are very unhappy, and, as I am the same—let's be friends."

"Friends? You and I?"

Her face was gentle, but a strange look had come to her eyes.

"I cannot be friends with you, or with any one. I have no talent for friendship. I can only love—and hate."

There was a short silence.

"I can hate, too," he said, at length.

She held out her hand. "And you can love. You have been kind to me, and I thank you. Please do one thing more for me. Make Lord Welter go away. I will never marry him."

"Very well. I will take him away to-day. Will you tell me one thing? Is it because you do not care for him, or because you cannot marry him?"

"Because I must not."

She turned and went back into the house, leaving Gratwicke looking after her, much puzzled. As he went down the path, past where she had stood, he saw a bit of paper, and picked it up.

"Dimitri died 2.40," he read, absently, and dropped it. It was the telegram the Russian had received the night before. "She doesn't seem much

cut up about Dimitri," he thought, with a laugh. "Queer creature she is!"

V

CISSY FFOULKE had hardly realized, until she found herself face to face with the task of giving up all hope that Gratwicke would in the end marry her, what that hope had been to her for years.

She was thirty-four, and she had known him since she was nineteen. For thirteen out of the fifteen years she had been in love with him, and for nearly ten she had clung to the thought that some day, when he had settled down, when Rose Trevor had at last definitely given him up, he would turn to her and her money as an easy method of rehabilitation.

He had been only twenty-seven when he met the great beauty, the Rose of Devon, as she was then called. Cissy remembered the occasion with painful distinctness. It had been at a ball at the Countess of Clandonald's. He had dined at her house before the ball, and had been taken thither by her and her husband. He was making love, more or less, to Cissy at the time, and she was in the seventh heaven at the prospect of a cotillon with him. They arrived late, and, as they entered the ball-room, the picture was presented to their eyes that Cissy recalled to her dying day, at least as easily as Gratwicke, the current of whose life it had changed.

Under the great chandelier, in the centre of the vast room, stood Mrs. Trevor, talking to royalty. The light fell on her beautiful figure in its simple, white-satin gown, glowing in her splendid brown hair, and her young face, turned a little timidly toward her august admirer, was as the face of the Madonna in some old picture.

Gratwicke stopped short, and Cissy felt his arm tremble. Then they went on.

Trevor was the sensation of the hour. Every one was talking of her splendid beauty, and of her charming manner.

Cissy spent the evening like one caught in the meshes of a horrible dream. During the cotillon, Gratwicke hardly spoke. His green eyes followed the beauty wherever she went; his mouth was drawn into a straight line under his mustache.

"You have lost your heart, haven't you, Char?" Cissy ventured, once, laughing.

He turned, staring at her vaguely. "I beg your pardon?"

"I say you've lost your heart."

"Cissy—I'm going to marry her!"

"But, my dear boy, she is married! There's her husband—the tall man with the stick."

It gave her a hateful pleasure to tell him.

"Bah! A cripple *her* husband!" For the first time, she heard the sneering laugh for which he afterward became famous.

Then had come the scandal. Rose Trevor had fallen in love with him, and they ran away together, living on the Continent for two years. Then, one day, her name appeared again in the papers, as about to make her reappearance on the stage, and her great triumph as Juliet took place. London went mad about her. Cissy remembered the famous premier when the Prince of Schwalbach-Nauheim threw her the famous diamond star in a bouquet. Down in a stall, quite alone, sat Gratwicke, his face as white as a sheet. Two days after this, the quarrel at the club had occurred, when Gratwicke had literally nearly broken the German's neck. When he was released on bail, every one knew how Trevor had herself driven to the prison and taken him to her house.

Little by little, people became accustomed to Gratwicke's mad doings—doings by which the beautiful actress always profited. The money he received for the reversion of his estate in Somerset he gave her in the form of a diamond necklace, the like of which few royalties can boast, and later, to celebrate a reconciliation after a brief quarrel, he had actually sold at auction all of his magnificent family portraits,

and with the money bought her the house in Pink street that she still inhabits.

It was an old story, made interesting only by the furious lengths to which the man went to regain or retain the favor of the woman who was ruining him, and by the incredible humiliations that he accepted from her, without protest.

Her husband, who had divorced her immediately after her elopement with Gratwicke, had remarried, and every one expected, for some time, that Gratwicke would marry her. The tales that were told, explaining the non-fulfilment of the expectation, were various. One was that they were already married secretly; another, that she refused to become Lady Gratwicke, as she could have all he possessed without giving up her freedom; a third story was that Gratwicke refused to marry her, and that his obstinate refusal was the cause of the first great quarrel between them. He was said to have declared that he would ruin himself for her, but that he was the last of an honorable family, and that he would not continue that family, since he had become what he was. No one knew the truth, and Cissy Ffoulke had failed in all her efforts to discover it.

For four years, now, Gratwicke was supposed to have broken definitely with the beautiful lady of many adventures, but Cissy knew that he had not forgotten her, and that, at least twice, when Trevor had sent for him, he had gone, dropping whatever he might have had in hand, obeying like a slave.

He had inherited, three years ago, a small estate in Sussex, which, by some quibble in the law, could not be taken by his hungry creditors, but the money he had received as part of the legacy, he had at once used to pay, in part, those outraged Britons. Since his going through the bankruptcy court, he was supposed to be paying a decent amount in the pound, and his mother's brother, the Earl of Montsuttén, who had not spoken to him for years, was

said to have made overtures of friendship to the black sheep.

With his usual half absent-minded insouciance, the black sheep had made one or two visits in London since his inheritance, and had been, to every one's surprise, quite civilly received. If the earl, who was a bachelor, were to take poor, dear Gratwicke up, it would not do to be behindhand.

Then, poor, dear Gratwicke had such a way of ignoring his past trespasses that one really quite forgot them, too—for a time! And, after all, young men will be young men, and Minnie and Mamie are getting on.

The Earl of Montsuttén, who had not the slightest intention of ever forgiving his nephew for the disgrace he had brought on the family, chuckled sardonically when he observed the Christian charity extended to that nephew. Charles was a great scapegrace, no doubt, and should never have a farthing of the Montsuttén money; society, being, as a whole, quite as bad as the scapegrace himself, might get along as well as it could without tips from the earl.

Perhaps if the Honorable Minnie, or the Honorable Mamie were to become Lady Gratwicke, and there should be an heir, the earl might reward the charity and courage of the mother with a hint as to the Montsuttén money; He might, and then again, he might not, the good old man decided, with a grin.

Once, when rumors of his nephew's engagement to Miss Logan, the great Scotch heiress, reached his ears, the old man almost faltered in his determined hatred, but for a moment only, and he was very glad that it had been but for a moment, when he was told the tale of Gratwicke's sudden departure from the Logans' very house, for Paris, whither he was supposedly called by the hussy, Rose Trevor.

Since then, there had been no more rumored engagements, but Cissy had seen that Gratwicke, weary of the husks, was trying, in a spasmodic, characteristically careless manner to win his way back into respectable so-

ciety. And he had succeeded, in a measure, and was, she knew, bitterly dissatisfied with his success. And she had hoped, hoped on.

Then, that evening on the terrace, the hope had gone out, and as she lay thinking, all through the long night, she felt herself old and futureless.

VI

BEFORE Lord Welter had awakened, Gratwicke opened his door softly, and went in.

The young man had not darkened his window, and the sun, a fitful and rather threatening sun, came in, falling full on the bed. Welter was sleeping heavily, after a restless night.

Gratwicke sat down and looked at him, a thoughtful frown on his face.

The boy's age was just what his own had been when he first met Rose Trevor. And Harry had fallen in love, according to the possibilities of his nature, with the red-headed Russian, as completely as Gratwicke had with the Rose of Devon. Gratwicke frowned harder, and shook his head impatiently. The resemblance should end there. Welter should not make a mess of things, as he himself had done.

The red-headed Russian was not beautiful, but she certainly had charm, and the air of mystery about her was bound to captivate the boy's imagination. There was no vulgar secret about her family, her origin. Lady Hawtrey herself had told Welter that the girl's maternal aunt, a Princess Something-or-other, had been a great friend of her own, and that Zoloff, Luba's father, had been a colonel in the army, and a charming man. The parents had died, and the young girl, refusing to live with the princess, had come to England as governess to the Hawtrey children, straight from her aunt's house.

But that other mystery, the mystery of soul, was the girl's. Her eyes were full of some quality that Gratwicke did not know how to qualify, and her low voice was strangely attractive. Grat-

wicke could quite understand Welter's infatuation, and, unlike many people who have suffered severely from a malady themselves, he did not undervalue its seriousness in another.

"I say, Harry! Harry, wake up!"

Welter opened his heavy eyes slowly, and looked around with a bewildered sigh.

"It's late, old chap—nearly nine, and if we are to be off by noon, you must look sharp. The landlady says a storm is coming, but that we can get as far as Boccadoglio."

Welter sat up in bed. "I say, Charlie, I'm not off to-day!"

"But we are! No use staying on at this dull little hole."

"You may go. I stay."

Gratwicke rose, and walked up and down the little room as he talked. "No use, my dear fellow. The girl's as hard as nails. I've been talking to her, and her only desire is to have us clear out."

"I don't care a damn what her only desire is. I shall stay as long as I like, and, what's more, I think it beastly cheeky of you to mix yourself in my affairs."

Gratwicke's celebrated temper never rose at trifles, and, with a good-natured laugh, he left the room and went down-stairs, where he found the bishop and Cynthia standing at the door, watching the advance of a huge black cloud from over the mountains to the right.

"An awful storm is coming," the bishop began; "the landlady seems quite alarmed. I fear we must put off our departure, at least until afternoon."

Cynthia, rosy and fresh in her blue-silk shirt, nodded gaily to him. "I love a thunder-storm."

And a storm was certainly coming. The sun, fickle and fluctuating since his first appearance that morning, was gone entirely, and a sullen wind moaned in the trees.

Up and down the terrace Cynthia walked, taking in the view on all sides, shivering pleasurably at the sound of the wind, and wondering at what hour breakfast would be served.

"I am fearfully hungry, aren't you?" she asked Gratwicke, who sadly regretted that he was not.

Her hair, puffed out in a funny Japanese fashion new to him, shone like bronze; there was not a loose strand anywhere, not even on the white nape, and yet it was all soft and unconfined-looking. He noticed that her chin was charming, and that her slim feet in their heavy little boots were beautifully arched, though rather long.

At length, the rain came down as if the cloud had parted and let it all fall at once, and the young girl and Gratwicke scampered like two children across the terrace into the house, and stood looking out.

"Rain is so nice when one is inside; so comfy, don't you think?"

Her little way of asking his opinion after expressing her own, amused and pleased him. She was a great relief after poor Cissy's sentimentalities, and the Russian's *air fatal*.

"How old are you?" he asked, suddenly.

She laughed.

"I am twenty-three. Yesterday was my birthday."

"Twenty-three! When I was your age, I was at Oxford," he observed, a little absently.

"I have a cousin at Balliol—why do you call it Ba-liol, and not as it's written?"

"Sorry. Ba-liol it is, though I'm sure I've no idea why. Christ Church is my college. Have you ever been there?"

"Yes. It is adorable. Billy had a tea for us."

"Billy being the cousin?"

"Yes. He's such a duck!"

"*Excellenza*—the coffee is served!"

It was Vincenzo, beaming with delight at the rain, which the good Lord had sent to detain his guests at least half a day longer.

The dining-room, a long, low room with a dark-brick floor and a spotless table, was very pleasantly lighted, in addition to the dull daylight, by a crisp, crackling open fire of pine-cones and pine logs.

"Goat's milk?" asked the bishop, suspiciously, as Vincenzo offered him a small blue jug full of white liquid.

Vincenzo laughed. That was a question he understood. "No, no, riverenza, no got-smeelek. Cow, cow!"

Welter did not come down, nor the Russian, until breakfast was nearly over, and then they came in almost together, and, with a stiff bow, sat down at opposite ends of the table. Welter held some papers and a letter in his hand, and, as he took his place, Vincenzo came in with the rest of the post. There were two letters for Gratwicke, and one for Mademoiselle Zoloff, which Gratwicke handed her, as it had been given him by mistake. He almost started at the furious look she gave him, and then positively frowned with discomfort as she said, with a sudden conquering of her anger that was unpleasant in its revelation of unusual self-control, "Thank you, Sir Charles."

As he came back to his place, Cynthia smiled at him, making a funny little face.

"Poor you! Did you hear what she called you?"

He did not understand until she gave an explanatory glance at the busily reading Welter, and Gratwicke burst out laughing. "You *are* bitter!" he said. "What a dangerous enemy you would make!"

VII

THE rain continued all day, shutting in the little plateau with great clouds of mist that hid, by some curious freak of nature, not only the mountain heights, but the valley below, so that, as Cynthia said, the inn and its terrace seemed to be a little world suspended in chaos.

"What luck!" exclaimed Vincenzo to his sister-in-law, as they worked together in the kitchen. "Iddio sends this rain and keeps the *Inglese* here to-day, perhaps to-morrow, perhaps even longer!"

Teresa laughed.

"Ah, bah! God didn't derange the

clouds for your benefit, 'Cenzino! You are too vain, my dear."

Vincenzo shrugged his shoulders. He was convinced that Teresa adored him. She was a woman, and he a most enchanting man; they lived in the same house; therefore, of course the poor girl suffered on his account. This, naturally, pleased him.

He pulled a bit of red geranium from a plant in the window, and stuck it jauntily in his black curls just over his left ear.

"Vain? I? Foolish creatures women are. *They* are vain, men never. Fetch me a glass of black wine, will you, like a good girl?"

Teresa took a candle and went down into the dark cellar, the red light shining with a Rembrandt-like effect on her sunburned face and against the blackened stone wall. As a matter of fact, she disliked her sister's husband, but she felt the uselessness of trying to prove this to him, and so philosophically accepted his mistaken hypothesis.

Adalgisa was distressed by the heavy rain. It was out of season, ominously continuous, and she knew what it might mean to the poor people in the valley below.

The good woman stood at an upstairs window, looking out, her thin little figure, in its clumsy gown and clean apron, outlined against the wet glass.

"Madonna! A wayfarer, and in this weather!"

Out of the mist a man was climbing slowly up the path through the olives. He was not a peasant, she saw at once, and by the way he wore his long, dark cloak, she knew that he was, though an Italian, a stranger to that part of the country. He walked slowly, his head bent, his hat pulled low over his eyes.

"Poor man, he is wet to the skin. I must warm some things for him," thought Adalgisa, slipping off her *zoccoli*—wooden shoes—and hurrying quietly down-stairs.

The stranger was just entering the house.

"Good morning. Can you let me have a room?"

Adalgisa looked at him. "*Si—signore*," she added, doubtfully.

The boy, for he was little more, laughed.

"I am not a *signore*," he said. "I am only a poor musician. But I am wet through, and I can pay for a small room——"

When she had conducted him up two flights of stairs into a little, three-cornered room under the eaves, she hurried down and fetched an armful of coarse linen and a suit of Vincenzo's.

"There! Put those on, and then come down-stairs, and I'll give you some hot coffee."

The boy nodded, absently. He had taken a clumsy package from under his cloak, and was picking at the knots in the cord that held it together.

Adalgisa returned to the kitchen, and told her sister of the arrival. "He is thin!—but, *mio Dio*, thin as a shadow! And to come through such a rain with a cough like that!"

Meantime, in the *salone*, a large, bare room to the left of the house-door, containing six chairs, a sofa, a table, and colored portraits of the late pope, the late king, and Umberto with his fierce eyes, Cynthia sat chatting with Gratwicke, while the bishop wrote letters.

Greatly to Gratwicke's relief, Cissy Ffoulke had sent word by her maid that she had a bad headache, and would not come down. It would have been awkward to be shut up in the little room with her. Welter had gone for a tramp, immediately after breakfast, and the Russian girl had not appeared since leaving the breakfast-table.

Gratwicke leaned back in his little chair, and watched Cynthia as she talked to him. She told him of her progress through Italy; of her love for Rome and Florence, in which cities she had done with the usual enthusiasm all the things one does in one's youth. She had seen the Colosseum by moonlight; picked violets in the Pamphili gardens; thrown a copper

into the fountain of the Trevi; got up at dawn to see the Giotto fresco in Santa Croce with the sunlight on it; walked to Bellosguardo to see the sunset; climbed to the top of the Campanile, and the rest. Gratwicke had done the same things when he was nineteen, and somehow, as the girl talked, the feeling of nineteen seemed to come back to him for a few minutes. He remembered a little Irish girl whom he had adored in Florence—her name was Nora something—and they had become engaged in Santa Croce, regardless of the indignation of the neglected frescoes they had come to see! He remembered the warmth of the sun, when they came out into the square; and the whir of the pigeons flying about the singularly unresponsive statue of Dante.

He sighed.

"What is the matter? Am I boring you?" Cynthia sat up very erect, and, on her guard against the horrible blunder of being young, began asking him very intelligent questions about the war in South Africa.

"No, no, never mind South Africa. We are going to make a mess of things down there. Tell me more about—your travels."

But she looked at him, suspiciously.

"It can't really interest you, Lord Welter! I've done only what you must have done a hundred times——"

"Exactly," he returned, gently. "But you don't know what it is, the charm of the first time! No one knows it until it's long since gone. Did you go to Venice?"

"Yes. Oh, indeed we did! Isn't it perfect?"

The bishop looked up, his intelligent little face full of mischief. "I had to drag her away from that ill-smelling city by the hair of her head——"

"Shame on you, father! Why, Lord Welter, he was mad about it, and whenever I couldn't find him I made a bee-line for the Bridge of Sighs, and there he'd be lying back in a black gondola, sentimentalizing away like a boy!"

"Boys don't sentimentalize about

things, my dear. Their own personality looms too big, doesn't it, Lord Welter?"

So the bishop, too, believed him to be Welter!

He agreed, absently. He hated deceiving them about his name, but he was too comfortable under the illusion to have the courage to dispel it. It poured; Welter had gone out; Cissy was out of the question, and, if the bishop and his daughter knew who he was, he would have no one to talk to all day. Besides, he liked the bishop and his daughter, and he would hate to have them dislike and shun him. He would tell Cynthia in the evening.

He watched her, lazily. Perhaps she would flare up and scold him. He wouldn't mind that. What he would dislike would be the look of offended disgust that he had seen in her face the evening before, when she had asked him not to present Sir Charles Gratwicke to her.

How silly she was! And how young!

"Have you seen the kitchen?" he asked, at length, after a little pause.

"No; is it pretty?"

"Well—pretty—hardly that. But it's a picturesque old place. Shall we go and look at it?"

VIII

SHE rose, and they walked together down the dark corridor. As they passed the stairs, a young man came down, a violin in his hand. He drew back to let them go on ahead, saying, civilly, his black eyes fixed on Cynthia's face, "Pardon, mademoiselle." Then, as she murmured a conventional reply, his face changed curiously.

"That boy fell in love with you on sight," remarked Gratwicke, as they reached the kitchen.

"Nonsense!"

"Did you see his face?"

She laughed.

"No, I didn't notice him particularly."

Adalgisa greeted her two visitors cordially. The kitchen was a low,

whitewashed room whose ceiling was black with the smoke of at least two generations—in curious contrast to the brilliant cleanliness of everything below. The rows of copper pots and pans gleamed even in the dusk of a gray day, and the brilliant green of the earthenware things lent a note of color to the whole. There was an open fire before which a spit was being turned by a small boy, an old-fashioned spit on which were bound, in humble emulation of St. Lawrence, two beautiful chickens.

Opposite the fireplace stood a small tile stove.

A bowl of macaroni stood on the table, and a great osier basket of lettuce.

"Isn't it delightful?" asked Cynthia. "I am so hungry!"

The youth of the corridor had followed them, unnoticed, and sat by the window, his violin on his knees. His melancholy dark eyes followed the girl around the room with an expression, it seemed to Gratwicke, of eager curiosity.

"Can you play the violin?" the elder man asked him, carelessly, in French.

"*Mais oui, monsieur!* I am a musician. Perhaps, later, the ladies and gentlemen will permit that I play a little?"

Cynthia was delighted with the idea, and asked him whether he had just come.

"Yes, mademoiselle. It was a long walk in the rain, and my cough is bad——"

As they went back to the salon, Cynthia said to Gratwicke, her voice full of pity:

"Consumption, don't you think?"

"Looks like it, at least."

"It must be—horrible to be ill."

"But you would not be afraid to die?" he asked.

She hesitated.

"I don't know. I fear that I should, a little. One knows people here—I mean, there are so many people one is fond of."

She blushed a little, embarrassed by

her own earnestness, as they sat down by the little table with the red-plush cover. The bishop had gone.

"I remember," Gratwicke went on, "my grandmother—dear old woman, my grandmother—our women have always been decent—said to me once that the world was full of strangers to her, but that heaven—she was old-fashioned and used the old-fashioned word—was full of her friends."

"I see. It's a very beautiful thought. And when one is young, and most of one's friends are still here, I suppose it's natural to feel that heaven would be a little lonely——"

It was a curious conversation, he thought, for a bishop's daughter to be having with the notorious Sir Charles Gratwicke!

"By admitting heaven, one admits hell, you know," he continued, checking the smile that quivered on his lips. "I dare say a bad man will meet his old pals, too, later?"

"In hell, you mean? I never thought of that!"

There was a dimple, when she laughed.

"It is, however, a perfectly logical supposition," he assured her, gravely. "Sir Charles Gratwicke, for instance—don't you believe that when his day comes, he'll find Nym, Bardolph, Pistol, and the rest?"

"Ah, but you are implying that Sir Charles Gratwicke is Falstaff? Or Harry?"

"He is not old enough for Falstaff."

"Nor good enough for Harry."

They were friends now, and, without embarrassment, she could speak of him who was not her friend.

"Not good enough? Surely, Harry was a roisterer?"

"Yes, he was that—and a good-for-nothing. But so far as I can remember, he was not——" She broke off short, afraid, he saw, of hurting his feelings.

"Not a what?" he persisted, gently.

"Let us talk about something else, Lord Welter."

A malicious desire to make her say

the word she had suppressed, and, when she had said it, then and there to tell her that it was to him she had applied it, seized him.

"Say it! Not what?"

"Well, then—not dishonorable."

It hurt. It hurt more than he would have thought possible.

"I never heard that word applied to him before," he said, slowly.

"But I have! Think of that poor girl, Effie Logan, and of her family. Bah! It was outrageous!"

"I happen to know that the story has been very much exaggerated, Miss Carey."

"I happen to know, from an eye-witness of the whole thing, that it—could not be exaggerated."

He started.

"An eye-witness?"

"Yes, Nelly Coleman, a friend of mine, was stopping at Glen Logan at the time. She told me exactly how it happened."

"Well?" he asked, shortly.

"He had asked Effie Logan to marry him, and had given her a ring. Every one knew of the engagement, and Effie—Nelly says it was wonderful to see her! She adored him. And then, one morning, without a word to anybody, he simply went away. They didn't hear from him for days, and when they did, it was to have him break the engagement, without a word of explanation. Surely you can't say that that was behaving honorably!"

She frowned at him, in anticipation of his answer, but he was silent for several seconds.

He felt his temper rising, rising, and the curious impersonal fear of it that came over him at times kept him silent until he felt that he had the upper hand of it again.

"He behaved badly, no doubt—outrageously, even; but—does it not occur to you that he might have had some reason?"

"Reason! What reason could he possibly have for so grossly insulting people who were being so kind to him?"

He had lost the feeling that she was a child; she had risen, on the tide of her

honest indignation, to his own level; she was his evenly-matched opponent.

"Your friend didn't know, I suppose, what was in the telegram he received the morning he went away?"

She frowned, impatiently.

"Of course she didn't know."

"Well, that telegram contained a summons that he could not refuse, a summons from the person whom he cared for most in the world——"

"I know. Oh, every one knows that he went to Paris to that Trevor woman. As if that didn't make it all the worse!"

Gratwicke rose. He was white, and his eyes nearly closed in the way they had when one of his Berserker furies was coming on.

"Very well," he said, with an effort, "have it your own way. If I stay, I'll lose my temper, so I'll go up-stairs. Good morning."

He went out without another word, leaving her to feel the room strangely empty.

IX

THE bishop, his daughter, and Luba Zoloff ate their luncheon alone, for none of the three others put in an appearance.

Cynthia chatted with the Russian girl throughout the meal, but she missed Gratwicke, and wished she had not quarreled with him. Luba, when luncheon was over, left the dining-room at once, and, with a sigh of weariness, Cynthia followed, going in to see how Mrs. Ffoulke was.

Cissy lay in bed, her maid brushing her hair. Cynthia sat down by her.

"Isn't it deadly?" the girl asked. "How is your poor head?"

"Better, but I sha'n't get up. Bed is the only bearable place on such a day. What have you been doing?"

"Oh, nothing. I talked to Lord Welter for a while, and then he went out. What a queer man he is!"

Cissy laughed. "I certainly never thought of Harry as queer! What did he do?"

"Oh, nothing in particular. We

were talking about—his friend, you know—and he wouldn't admit that he wasn't everything admirable."

"Not really! Poor Char certainly isn't admirable, and I didn't know that any one thought he was. Harry Welter has been scolded enough for insisting on sticking to him. Carry Hawtrey loathes him—I mean, Charlie Gratwicke. Never mind Stone. She knows all about it, don't you, Stone?"

The maid smiled. She did, indeed, know a great deal more about both Gratwicke and her mistress than either of them suspected. Blessed be the man who invented keyholes!

"I told him about Nelly Coleman, you know," went on Cynthia, glad to talk the matter over, "and he told me that the telegram was a summons from the person Sir Charles loved best in the world!"

"Well, it was!"

"He has a fearful temper, hasn't he?" broke off the girl, suddenly. "He grew perfectly green at the end, and marched out of the room with the most hideous scowl. I do dislike ill-tempered people."

Cissy stared, while Stone put the last pin in her hair and left the room.

"Well, you must have a most extraordinary effect on him. I never saw Harry Welter angry in my life! Where is he now?"

"I don't know. I think he came upstairs."

The elder woman hesitated for a second, and then asked, "Where is Charlie, by the way?"

"Oh, he went off for a walk right after breakfast."

"For a walk in this rain! Well, you are all of you as mad as hatters, I must say. Charlie is like a cat, generally—he loathes a wetting. What on earth ever possessed him to go out?"

Cynthia rose, and went aimlessly to the window.

"I'm sure I don't know," she answered, with a yawn. "Oh, how I wish it would stop pouring!"

The rain, however, was coming down apparently harder than ever, and the mist, encroaching on all sides, half cov-

ered the plateau. It was a very forlorn outlook, and Cynthia sighed as she turned away from it.

"Are you going to stay in bed, Mrs. Ffoulke?" she asked.

"Oh, yes. My neuralgia has tired me horribly, and there is nothing to do, if I did get up. Thank heaven, I have the talent of sleeping whenever I like."

Cynthia went out of the room, and walked aimlessly down the corridor toward the stairway. She was not aimless, as a rule, nor easily depressed by trifles such as a rainy day, but, for some reason, she felt as if she were going to cry.

The stairs leading to the top story were before her, and, hardly observing what she did, the young girl mounted them slowly. She wished she had not quarreled with Lord Welter; it was, after all, ungenerous to quarrel with a man for standing up for his friend. When he came home, she would tell him she was sorry. Or, no! A strange new shyness seized her. She could not possibly tell him that she was sorry. And, as for that, she really was not; people had no right to let their personal feelings deaden their sense of right and wrong, as Lord Welter had done. She sighed. She had reached the top of the stairs, and stood in the narrow, low-ceiled corridor.

There were several closed doors, and a skylight, evidently newly made, through which fell the dismal gray light, and on which the rain pattered unremittingly. With a look of half surprise at finding herself where she did, Cynthia turned, and was about to go down again, when the door nearest to her opened softly, and the Russian girl came out. She closed the door instantly when she saw Cynthia, but not before Cynthia had noticed, behind her, a man's figure—the youth of the violin.

"What are you doing here?" asked Luba, sharply, coming forward, her face paling.

"What are you?" retorted Cynthia, not without a natural resentment at the other's tone.

Then Luba laughed.

"I? Oh, I was taking a plaster to the poor boy with the cough. My room, you know, is under his, and I heard him coughing. He is in a consumption, I fear."

Cynthia stared at her, disbelief in her eyes.

"Oh!"

The two girls went down-stairs together, and the Russian said, as they reached her door: "Won't you come in? It is so dull to-day!"

Curiosity led Cynthia to accept the invitation, and for half an hour the two sat chatting, observing each other narrowly.

The room was bare, but several handsomely framed photographs stood on the table, and the toilet things, Cynthia saw, were of ivory. Over the bed hung a curious old crucifix of inlaid brass. On a table by the window stood a small painting-apparatus—palettes, tubes of color, and brushes.

"You paint?" asked the American, suddenly.

The other girl smiled. "I try! That is why I am here. I am here now for three Summers. This year my old aunt died, so I came alone."

"Where do you live in the Winter?"

"In Milan. I am governess—daily governess, one says. I used to be in England. Sir Charles Gratwicke may have told you?"

"I do not know him, so he told me nothing."

"You do not know him? I should have thought you did."

"Then you would have been wrong. Why, who is that? Excuse me for asking, but it looks so like——"

She took up the picture, and looked closely at it.

"It is a lady in England. I was her children's governess for three years." The Russian took the picture and, setting it down deliberately, but with a flush on her cheeks, began talking of something else, in such a way that Cynthia, feeling almost as if she had been guilty of an impertinence, rose, and took her leave.

As she left the room, the sound of a

dry cough overhead drew her eyes to the low ceiling.

Luba shrugged her shoulders. "Poor boy! He has taken a very bad cold," she said. "Good-bye."

X

GRATWICKE walked until evening, returning home just as the rain ceased, toward six o'clock. He was tired, but he had got rid of his temper, and felt at peace with himself, though rather sad.

The episode of Effie Logan was, either rightly or wrongly, the one in his whole life of which he was thoroughly ashamed, and yet, he did not consider himself utterly to blame about it. The other deeds for which he might have been expected to blush, at least metaphorically, had never troubled him. His life had been his own, and he had used it as he liked. He had never wittingly hurt any one, because when people stood in his way, and he ran them down, his eyes were so fixed on his goal that he barely noticed the obstacles between him and it.

His mother had died when he was a child; he had never seen his father. Brought up chiefly in school, spending his holidays at the houses of two of his uncles, with children who, afraid of the temper of which he was then proud, gave way to him on all sides, the child had grown into such a tyrant as one rarely sees nowadays. There had been no one whose right to rule him he recognized, except the masters in his school, whom he hated. After a misdemeanor of some kind, when he was fourteen, he was beaten, and, turning on his chastiser, caught him in his suddenly strong arms, and literally nearly killed the man. He was, of course, expelled for this, and was sent by Lord Montsutton to Gratwicke House with a tutor, where he was kept for a year.

In defiance of all expectation, he behaved very well, studying hard and intelligently, for he had taken a sudden liking for Mr. Crabbe, the tutor, who

had been chosen for his indomitable will and physical strength.

Crabbe never deserted him, and was possibly the one person in the world who understood him. "He has enough strength of will to conquer worlds," the big parson once said to the earl, "but no more strength of purpose than a kitten."

And the sudden dying down in an hour of an interest that had been growing for years, was indeed the secret of Gratwicke's failure in life.

Until he met Rose Trevor, he had never cared for any one, except "Crabby," as he still called his old tutor, and he himself looked on his affection for Crabby as a curious freak of his nature. Then he met the beautiful actress, and forgot every one and everything else in the world. He thought it all over for the thousandth time, as he tramped over the slippery mountain paths that day in the rain. The woman's hold on him had surely something of the uncanny about it. Many and many a time he had sworn he would never see her again, and yet—she had but to call, and he went.

And now, she was at Trento. He did not wish to see her. He despised her. He did not love her. And yet, if she chose to write him the old formula, "I want you," he knew that he would go.

It would have been better if he had married. Even Cissy would have done, if he could have made up his mind to her.

Toiling up the last stretch of the muddy path, he sighed, and stood still. The rain had stopped, but it was too evidently only for a short time. And up and down the gleaming gravel, her skirts held carefully around her ankles, walked Cynthia. When she saw him, she turned and came promptly toward him.

"I have been waiting for you," she said. "I am sorry I was cross."

She was a child again, and he smiled at her as he would have at a child.

"But you were not cross! I was most rude."

"Oh, yes, you were rude, but then,

I shouldn't have abused your friend, and I should have liked your standing up for him. I do like it, now that I've thought it over, and I beg your pardon."

This was when he should have told her who he was. What he did was to say, earnestly:

"And I beg yours."

Then they went toward the inn. Welter had come back, and was walking up and down the corridor, impatiently.

"Have you seen Miss Zoloff?" he asked Adalgisa, who was going upstairs just then, laden with a great basket of freshly washed linen.

"*La signorina?* Yes. She is ill, *milordo*," the woman answered, regretfully.

Welter turned to Gratwicke and Cynthia, as they came in.

"Good evening," he said, with an effort. "Would you mind going on to-morrow morning?" he began; "I mean even if it rains. I've had an important wire——"

Gratwicke nodded. "Not a bit. Like it, rather than otherwise. Going up-stairs?"

Welter did not come down to dinner. Neither did Luba Zoloff.

Mrs. Ffoulke, on the other hand, appeared in a tea-gown, and was very amusing and agreeable. She had not intended leaving her room, but the sight, from her window, of the meeting between Cynthia and Gratwicke had decided her. As she had thought many times before, on imagining that she saw in Gratwicke signs of feelings that might eventually lead to a marriage, "Any one but this one!"

And Gratwicke, relieved by his determination to leave the next morning, ate his dinner to an accompaniment of wondering how he had best confess his deception to Cynthia.

It was curious that it did not come out during the meal—curious that Cissy did not refer to the absent Welter by his right name, or address him himself as "Charlie." He awaited some such chance with a sort of amused eagerness, mixed with nervousness.

But it did not come, and, an hour later, he and Cynthia were again pacing up and down the wet gravel, the bishop and Mrs. Ffoulke sitting just within the door.

"Where do you go from here?" Gratwicke asked, at length.

"Oh, back to San Franceschino. And you?"

"To Agnamera, first. Then—I don't know."

"Agnamera? That's where the king is going, isn't it? He passes through Ponterossa to-morrow night, you know. Adalgisa told me."

"Does he?"

"Yes. Every one is going; there is to be an arch, flowers, speeches, and so forth. A great event for these poor peasants!"

Gratwicke was silent for a moment, as they stood looking down into the valley, from which the mist had begun to clear.

Then he said, slowly:

"Miss Carey, I wonder if you will do me a favor?"

"A favor? I will if I can, Lord Welter."

"Thanks. It is this. Try not to think too hardly of—the notorious Sir Charles Gratwicke."

The girl turned, her soft eyes raised to his.

"You *are* a good friend," she said; "I wish I had as good a one."

There was, in her remark, no opening for a banal protest. He was silent for a second, then went on, still looking at her:

"When I have gone, please remember what I say to you now. Charles Gratwicke is a bad man, if you like, but he is also an unhappy one, and in the affair of poor little Effie Logan he was less to blame than you think. I know this."

"Very well, I will remember."

Forgetful of Mrs. Ffoulke and the bishop, he took her hand in his, and kissed it.

"Thank you."

Mrs. Ffoulke, however, had not forgotten him, and had watched the conversation with unwavering attention.

A moment later the bishop, at her suggestion, called his daughter and sent her to put on a wrap.

While the young girl was up-stairs, Cissy went out and joined Gratwicke. "Charlie," she began, abruptly, "are you falling in love with Cynthia Carey?"

He stared at her.

"Really, Cissy, you are singularly impertinent at times."

"Well, are you? Charlie, she wouldn't do for you at all. Don't think that I care personally, that last night was a mere *entrainement*—but you and I are such old friends! I know you couldn't be happy with an insignificant little girl like Cynthia."

She flushed, eagerly, under the queer compound of powder and liquid that she called her complexion.

"My dear Cissy, this is absurd. Because I talk for ten minutes with Miss Carey!"

"Then you aren't?"

She drew a deep sigh of relief.

"Charlie, aren't we friends any more? You'd tell me if you had any thoughts of that kind, wouldn't you? I know you would."

She got on his nerves. Her artificial face, so close to his, annoyed him; her voice made him impatient; her self-humiliation hurt him.

"I don't know that I'd tell you, Cissy. There is no particular reason why I should, though you, of course, would be one of the first people to hear of any engagement into which I might enter——"

"You mean, you wouldn't tell me, even if you were thinking of marrying Cynthia?"

Her trembling voice, the nervous movement of her hands, suddenly enraged him.

"Most certainly I would not. I hope you will not again make it necessary for me to tell you this."

He turned on his heel and left her, joining Cynthia, who had just come out with a scarf on her head, and leading her away in the opposite direction, with an air of devotion that nearly drove the looker-on mad.

A few minutes later, Vincenzo came into the kitchen, where his wife and his sister-in-law sat saying a rosary aloud together.

"I always said they were mad!" he exclaimed, triumphantly, holding up a ten-franc piece. "This for going down to the station to send a telegram!"

"I dreamed of white chickens," remarked Teresa, hardly breaking off in her prayer, "Oh, Thou, Who for us carried the heavy Cross——"

XI

A CLOCK struck. Cynthia sat up in bed and, feeling for her match-box, struck a light. Something had awakened her suddenly, but she did not know what it was. The candle flared up, shedding its feeble light over the whitewashed wall. Cynthia pushed her hair back from her ears. What was that noise which had awakened her?

Rising, she went to the window, and peered out. It was nearly morning, and the moon rode low in the sky. The mists had gone; the snow-peaks began to show white. Under her window, two men stood talking excitedly—Vincenzo and another man, a stranger. She could not hear what they said, but the tone of their voices alarmed her.

Hastily putting on a long coat over her nightgown, the young girl stepped out on her little balcony.

"Vincenzo," she called, "what is it?"

The men looked up.

"It's the river, *signora*——"

That was all she understood, but a glance at the valley explained it. The Bollente, usually only about fifty feet wide, had overflowed its banks and was rushing along in a whirling torrent, twice or thrice its usual breadth. A flood!

She remembered Adalgisa's anxiety, her constant looking up the valley, a half-comprehended explanation of the lake in the upper valley. Grasping

the cold iron railing, Cynthia watched the ominous water. At length, there was a sound to her left, and a man came out on the next balcony.

"Who is there—on the balcony?" he asked.

"It is I, Lord Welter, Cynthia Carey. What is it—a flood?"

"Yes. There are people living on the little island there, south of the Roman bridge. We are going to try to get them. I'm going to drop down from the balcony, now. Don't be frightened."

"Oh, why do you?"

"Because I do not wish to wake—your enemy, through whose room I'd have to go to get to the stairs. He would be in the thick of everything in ten minutes, and he's just got over a bad attack of rheumatism. Good-bye!"

He swung over the railing, caught the edge of the balcony, hung for a moment, and then dropped. "All right!" he called. Then he and the two other men went on down the slope, in silence.

As they reached the river bank, a low murmur of many voices met them.

"The bridge! The bridge is gone! Madonna save us!"

Looking up the valley, the three men paused. There is something very awful in the sight of a great piece of familiar masonry being swept away by the fury of the waters.

At the edge of the torrent stood nearly all the inhabitants of the little village nearest at hand, staring with fixed eyes toward the small island on which the doomed houses stood. There were three houses, three families, three groups of people related to the watchers; and they would die, and be whirled, shapeless things, down through the familiar meadows into the Adige!

There was only one boat, and it had twice capsized when an attempt had been made to launch it. Evidently, there remained nothing but prayer as a resource. The old curé walked up and down, his trembling hands clasped, trying to encourage his people to another effort. In vain. The boat had

always been an unlucky one; there was no doubt that it had been gazed on by Lucia Costa, who had the evil eye, as every one knew. The men stood, sullen and fierce, glaring at their enemy, the water.

Then—this was the version of the peasants, afterward—came a perfectly mad Englishman. And he shouted nonsense at every one, and raged and stormed like one possessed. It was something to remember. At length, the crazy Englishman took the ropes the men had brought, and tied one to each end of the boat. Then he took Carlo Mesti and half killed him, and gave Carlo one rope, and made other men hold fast to the rope, which no man minded. Then the Englishman—by the Madonna, but he was mad!—took off his coat and his boots, fastened the other rope to his waist, and waded out into the water.

The curé prayed aloud, during the swimmer's progress, and that saved him. After a long time, he reached the island, and the first of the houses. He loaded the boat with women and children, from the second-story window—the curé shouting prayers to the saints all the time—and then those brave men, Carlo Mesti and the others, pulled back that accursed boat, the madman steadying it by his rope.

Four times this was repeated. As the boat went back the third time, one of the houses slid into the water. The curé, good man, prayed on, and at length the people were all on shore, and only one house still stood. As the boat landed, Lucia Costa fell down in a fit. The curé's prayers had taken her curse from it.

The mad Englishman stood in the window of the last house until the boat had landed. Then he dropped into the water, and swam steadily across the river. Once he was nearly carried away, his black head bobbing about like a cork, but he was strong—oh, but strong!—and presently there he was, frowning, and uttering foolish words such as English people understand!

"I say, give me my coat, will you?"

Cynthia picked up the coat, and helped him put it on, without a word. She had seen the whole thing, having followed him as soon as she could dress, and her throat was closed with excitement.

"You shouldn't have come," he went on; "it is very cold, and—there might have been unpleasant things for you to see."

The curé came and, shaking hands warmly with Gratwicke, bade God bless him. The people he had saved kissed his hands, the edge of his coat, his feet. He was mad, of that there could be no doubt, but he had rescued them.

Cynthia watched him as he pushed them away with good-tempered impatience. Then, at length, he turned. "Let's go back to the inn; I am chilled to the bone. That water comes straight from a glacier."

They started up the springy, slippery path, in silence. He was grateful to her for not gushing. At length, she said:

"I am very proud of knowing you, Lord Welter."

"I am not Lord Welter. I am Charles Gratwicke."

She did not answer for a few minutes, and then she said, simply:

"I am sorry."

"You are not angry?"

"No. It would have been hard to tell me, I suppose. And you only tacitly accepted my mistake."

"You are very good to me."

He saw her lips quiver, and turned sharply away.

"Miss Carey; I go away in three hours; until I go, will you keep on being kind to me? I—should like to remember your kindness as the last thing."

She was silent.

"Will you—it must be nearly five o'clock—eat some breakfast with me, and let me tell you what I meant by saying that I was not so bad as you thought, in regard to—Miss Logan?"

"I would rather not have you tell me anything, but I will breakfast with you. Hurry and change your clothes,

or you will be ill. I will wake Adalgisa, and make her light the fire."

He took her hand in his cold, damp ones, in the hands that she knew had done so much evil, but that she, with her own young eyes, had just seen do so much good.

"Miss Carey, Cynthia—don't wake Adalgisa. Let me build the fire. Will you?"

XII

WHEN he came down, a few minutes later, Gratwicke found Cynthia kneeling before the hearth, heaping wood and pine-cones together on the pile of ashes. She was working for him! Roughly he bade her rise, and, with a few deft movements, completed the building of the fire. It flared up at the touch of his match, and he rose. On the table, Cynthia had set a jug of milk, and a great hunch of black-crusted gray bread.

"This is all I could find," she said, half-timidly.

"A loaf of bread and thou," he answered.

They were both hungry, and enjoyed the homely fare. At last, Gratwicke said, laying down the bread-knife:

"Thank you. You have been very good to me."

"Ah, good! No. You were very brave."

"I was never a coward. Now, listen. I am going to tell you about that day at Glen Logan. I know you don't want me to, but I must, for I—I want you to know that I had some small excuse. You know that I—was very fond of Rose Trevor; that for years I had been at her beck and call?"

"Yes."

"Well—I was ruined, and Effie Logan was rich, and liked me. I was told by an uncle of hers that, if I asked her to marry me, she would do so. I was afraid to ask her. I knew that, if Rose Trevor called me, I would go. I'm not trying to explain that; there is no explanation, but it was a fact. For months, I didn't go near the Logans. Then I saw Rose, and she told me she

was going to marry a Frenchman—that she would never see me again. I was glad. I give you my word, I was glad. Then came the engagement. The telegram that came the fourth day of my engagement was from Rose, as every one supposed. It said, 'Am in great distress. Come!' Of course, I should have gone to Logan, or I should have invented some civil lie, but I didn't, because I simply forgot everything on God's earth but the one fact that she was in trouble, and wanted me. I went, and found her in real distress. She had had a hemorrhage, and thought she was dying. I—I forgot all about the Logans. You see, Cynthia, I loved her, and she was the only person in the world whom I did love. And, later, when I realized that I still cared for her and had never once remembered poor little Effie, I, of course, broke off the engagement. I did it brutally, as you said. I *am* brutal. But God knows I have been sorry for the poor little thing. Only, you see, do you not, that I could not marry her?"

Cynthia looked at him.

"Oh, yes, I see."

"And do you still think me utterly unforgivable?"

She shook her head.

"No."

"I wonder, if we should ever chance to meet again, whether you would refuse to know me?"

She gave a forlorn little laugh.

"Refuse to know you? Oh, no. Tell me, Lord—Sir Charles, why do you not marry her?"

It amused him, her innocently asking the question that he knew so many people had feared to put to him. And it pleased him to tell her the simple truth.

"She has refused me at least a hundred times."

"But why?"

"Ah, why! Who knows?"

"She—but she surely—cares, too."

He rose, standing by the window where the light was now coming in tinged with the sun's gold. "Never mind her now, dear. Tell me, may I come to see you some time?"

"Yes."

"You must remember, what happened this morning was only what any able-bodied Saxon must have done—I am just what you thought me before."

"I don't believe all the horrid things," she said, vehemently. "I can't!"

"But they are true, the horrid things. I sold the reversion of my estate, I sold my family jewels—for her. I let her treat me like a dog, and I came back to her. She sold my mother's pearls, and gave the money to another man, and yet, when she called, I crept back to her like a whipped cur. I had no pride, no self-respect——"

They stood looking at each other, her hands in his. At length she spoke, sure of herself, afraid of nothing, in the new strength that had come to her.

"I don't care, I don't care any more what you did, nor—what you do."

And then, the knowledge that had been growing slowly in his mind during the past forty-eight hours, came to flower.

Middle-aged, good-for-nothing, disillusionized, embittered, unprincipled man as he was, there was a hope for him—a hope of better things, of happiness. And that hope lay in the cold little hands of the girl before him.

"Will you marry me, Cynthia?" he said, slowly.

XIII

"LUBA!"

"Please do not call me by my first name, Lord Welter."

"Very well, Mademoiselle Zoloff. The automobile is at the door. In ten minutes we shall be gone. Do you know how wretched you are making me?"

The Russian girl's strange face paled, as she shook her head quietly. It was eleven o'clock the morning of the rescue, and she was in the old garden, whither Welter had followed her. They stood facing each other over a low bush covered with red roses.

"Tell me, then, why you won't marry me. I—you must tell me that much."

"I will not marry you, because, of course, I do not love you."

"That," returned Welter, deliberately, "is a lie."

Cissy Ffoulke, who was concealed behind her jealousies, leaned forward breathlessly. To her surprise, the Russian did not answer at once.

"You will at least admit," Welter went on, "that you did care for me in England."

"Care for you in England? Ah, yes! I did! I loved you there! I'd have stolen for you, I'd have died for you, I'd have——" She broke off with a strong shudder. "And you! You loved me, too, but you were afraid of your sister! You didn't dare marry a governess. Bah! That was enough to cure me of my love for you, wasn't it? You went away, you never wrote, after telling me you loved me, and you let Lady Hawtrey send me away, because I had dared to raise my eyes to you! Russian women cannot love cowards, Lord Welter!"

Cissy was thrilled, and, cautiously opening her window a trifle, peeped down.

They were much too intent on each other to hear her, even if she had made a much greater noise. Welter's boyish face was flushed to a deep crimson, the girl's, on the contrary, being as white as her collar.

"If, then, you had been brave enough to marry me, I would have—ah, you lost something, my lord, by your fearfulness! The other day I told some one that I have no talent for friendship, that I do not know what it means. That is true; I know only love and hate. Love betrayed me, and, now, only hate remains——"

"For heaven's sake, don't say such things. If I was a coward then—and I admit that I was—God knows I have been punished. And if you will marry me, I shall make you happy. I can, and I will, I swear it."

She raised her eyes heavily to his, and their expression frightened him.

"Make me happy?" she said, slowly.

"Yes. You do love me. Oh, I know you do. There is some wretched mystery between us, but I am going to get at the bottom of it. You shall marry me, do you hear?"

She shook her head again.

"Please go now. I will never marry you. Forget me. It is better for you to forget me."

Against the quiet decision of her manner his impulsive confidence gave way suddenly.

"Very well. I can't drag you to church against your will, I suppose. Good-bye. If—if I can make Carry ask you to stay with her——"

And as suddenly as he had accepted her fiat, she broke down.

"Oh, Harry, Harry," she cried, suddenly stretching both hands out to him across the rose-bush, "if you only knew what you have done!"

A few minutes later, Welter climbed into his place in the automobile beside Gratwicke, and the big machine lumbered slowly down the hill.

"Well?" asked Gratwicke, suddenly.

"I don't know, Charlie. She—she does care for me—she admits it herself—but she wouldn't let me stay, and she swears she'll never marry me——"

Gratwicke turned, his green eyes full of the overflowing kindness of the very happy.

"I'm sure it will turn out all right, old chap," he said. "It's just some silly, girlish idea——"

"Oh, no, it isn't that. She is not 'girlish.' She is—I can't say it, Gratwicke—I'm a duffer at words—but she is not like other women. There is some mystery that—frightens me."

Gratwicke was silent. His thoughts had gone back to Cynthia and himself.

The happiness that for years seemed to have fluttered ahead of him, just out of his reach, was his at last. He felt young, full of good, of energy. In three days he was to join his sweetheart and her father at San Francisco, and ask the bishop for his daughter. It was characteristic of the man that the tremendous difficulty of his situation hardly occurred to him. His

past, his reputation, the things that were bound to array themselves against him in the bishop's mind, barely crossed his thoughts.

Past was past. He loved Cynthia, and she loved him, therefore, without protestations, without fuss, or vows—*tabula rasa*. And, tacitly, he expected every one concerned to accept the *tabula rasa* without a word of either surprise or doubt.

He himself had wished to go to the bishop that very morning, but Cynthia, less out of fear of a refusal—for, like most American girls, the possibility of parental refusal of her choice was far from her thoughts—than from a sort of wish to keep the secret quite to themselves for a little while.

"You will write to me," she had said, and, as he steered the auto skillfully down the steep road, Gratwicke smiled to himself over the composition of his love-letter. He would tell her again that he loved her—just so, in the simplest, unadorned words. He would tell her that he wished his mother could have lived to see what a wise man he had proved himself, after all, in the end. He would tell her—the lines in his face softened as he thought of all he would tell her; his eyes grew gentle. It was very wonderful to him, and he felt vaguely grateful to something that he had been given this great happiness.

Down in the valley a man crouched among some bushes, digging a long hole with a little hatchet. He worked rapidly, with a nervous glance, every now and then, over his shoulder. No one was in sight. The swollen river rushed heavily along, foaming angrily around the slim supports of the little wooden bridge that was, since the carrying away of the stone one, the only exit from the valley. The road was empty.

The man worked busily. When the hole was deep enough, he laid the hatchet in it, and buried it, pressing down the moist earth with his hands, and then strewing pine-needles over the slight hummock. At length, he

rose, and, turning to the valley, drew a deep breath.

"Madonna! What if I didn't cut deep enough! The boat rocked so—"

As he spoke, the sound of the automobile reached him, and he turned pale under his brown skin.

He stood as if turned to stone, his eyes fixed on the bridge, his ears strained to measure the distance and the pace of the lumbering vehicle.

Just as he began to hear the voices of the two Englishmen, a great noise from below caused him to turn. A creaking, cracking noise, then a crash, and the little wooden bridge was bobbing down the stream.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Gratwicke, stopping and staring incredulously at the river. "This is pleasant!"

Welter laughed aloud.

"Is there no other road?"

"No. Well, we might as well go back at once. Kismet!"

The automobile descended the slope, made a wide curve on the thick green grass of the meadow, and then crawled slowly back up the road.

As it disappeared, Vincenzo came out of his hiding-place, still white, his lips dry.

"That was a narrow escape," he said, hoarsely; "five minutes later—"

But, as he followed his prisoners back to the inn, his color returned, and a merry smile came to his lips. It had been a most excellent idea, cutting the supports, and he had been brave and wise in carrying it out. It would be at least five days before a new bridge could be built, and, until then, his house was full, and the price of food, owing to the ostensible difficulties of obtaining it, would go up at least thirty per cent.!

XIV

CYNTHIA, when the automobile disappeared down the road, put on her hat and went through the garden down into the olive grove. She wished to be alone, and the beauty of

the huge old gray trees, with the brilliant blue sky above them, pleased her. It was appropriate that happiness like hers should have such a setting.

Although she was so much younger than Gratwicke, and though she was in love for the first time in her life, she had a much truer appreciation of the difficulties before them than he had. She did not think that her father would absolutely refuse to allow her to marry Gratwicke, but she knew that he would object most strongly to her so doing, and that he would argue with her about it, by the hour. And the girl had an almost masculine dislike of useless discussion. She had made up her mind—or her heart—to marry the notorious Sir Charles Gratwicke, and nothing could change her intention. Therefore, why argue and discuss the pros and cons that could not influence her one whit?

But the arguments and discussions would take place, she knew. She would be taken home and sat on by a coroner's jury of aunts, she thought, with a rueful smile. She had so many aunts! And her uncles would protest, and her cousins, and the rector of St. John's, and old Dr. Barnes—even the cook would try to dissuade her. With a sigh, the girl put all the unpleasant thoughts behind her, and, sitting down on the damp grass, with a joyous disregard of consequences, gave herself up to feeling her happiness.

Suddenly, she heard a slight noise, and, turning, saw the young musician standing a few feet away, leaning against a tree. His face frightened her.

Looking up from her own happiness, she found herself face to face with despair. The boy's dark eyes were full of an agony so terrible that it seemed as if something must happen—that he must fall, or cry out. But he did neither, and his perfect immobility terrified the young girl so that she could no longer stay where she was. Rising, she went to him.

"What is it?" she asked.

He did not seem startled; his eyes

turned to her as if dumbly asking for aid, and he held out his hand.

She took it.

"You are ill? Tell me why you are suffering?" she went on, in French.

"Suffering—yes! Oh, I cannot, I cannot! They will kill me, but I cannot!"

He caught her hand in both his, and continued, rapidly, in Italian, so that she caught only a word or two.

"I am so young—I am only twenty-two—I thought I could, but I cannot——"

"Of course, you cannot, and you shall not," she returned, soothingly. "Come, sit down, and tell me, slowly."

Suddenly, she was pulled violently aside, so that she nearly fell.

"Leave him alone, will you? What is it to you? Go!"

Luba Zoloff stood by her, her hand on the boy's shoulder, as if she were arresting him.

"Go, I tell you! I will talk to him. You fool!" she went on, furiously, in Italian; "*imbecilli! meschino! canaglia!* Come with me."

The boy followed her without a word, leaving Cynthia so angry that she could hardly speak. Before the two had gone many steps, however, she had overtaken them.

"Mademoiselle Zoloff is very imperative," she said, in French, to the young man, "and you seem to belong to her, but if she is trying to force you to do something you do not wish to do, come to my father, and he will help you. Do not be a coward."

Luba dropped his arm.

"*Non, Miss Carey a raison! Ne soyez pas poltron, Gigi!*"

He raised his eyes to hers, and, slowly, his color came back.

"I—am not a coward," he returned. "And—I am not afraid. I am only—half ill. It is written."

It seemed to Cynthia that the boy grew to be several years older as he spoke, gazing fixedly into the Russian girl's eyes.

Then, raising his head, he took off his cap, and bowed.

"Miss Zoloff will tell you, made-

moiselle, of what I was thinking. I am off now. I go to Bellagna. Good-bye." He turned to Luba, holding out his hand. "Good-bye, and thank you again."

Another second, and he had gone, leaving the two girls together.

"You made me very angry," the Russian began, promptly; "I had just convinced him that he must go back to the seminary—he does not wish to be a priest, and had run away—and then I found you taking his part——"

Cynthia looked at her.

"I don't believe you," she said, coldly. Then she went on up the mottled slope to the garden.

XV

Cissy sat at her window, watching the road leading up to the house, down which she had an hour ago seen the red automobile disappear. The departure of the two men had not only distressed her, but she had got herself, she feared, into serious trouble, by sending a telegram to Rose Trevor. It would have been very amusing, and without a doubt very effective, to have Trevor march into the little inn and march out again with Gratwicke in her train, but it seemed, now that Gratwicke had gone, less funny.

If Trevor came, as she would, almost without a doubt, and found Gratwicke no longer there, there would be trouble. Cissy had many good qualities, but bravery was not among them. Her eagerness to detach the man she loved, at any price, from Cynthia, promised to make the price too heavy.

It was senseless, idiotic, disgusting of Gratwicke to have gone, leaving her, Cissy, in such a plight, and she had not an idea of what steps to take to avoid meeting the irate actress.

Cynthia, in her natural wish for solitude in which to dream over her love-story, had changed her father's mind about going back to San Franceschino, that day, and Cissy had been forced to acquiesce in the arrangement. So here she was, caught in her own trap.

Her slim hands clenched, as she sat at the window. It was abominable. Cynthia's perfectly driveling expression convinced her of the truth of her suspicions, and Gratwicke's manner had enraged her. Idiots!

A party of peasants passed down the road, carrying flowers, and dressed in their best. They were on their way to Ponterosa, to see the king. What fools peasants were! To walk for hours, to spend the day in ploughing their way through the muddy roads in the burning sun, to eat little, to arrive tired and footsore at some wretched third-class inn, and stand for hours at the station to see—what? The king! A little man with pop-eyes and an absurd mustache—she forgot, in her petulance, that the king, for those poor people, represents not only power, but, what is still more beautiful, romance.

Some one came up-stairs, and passed her room. Down in the little salon, Adalgisa was sweeping, and somewhere in the distance Teresa sang, lustily. And Charlie had gone. She had lost him definitely.

Life seemed very hard, and it might have been so sweet. After all, what did she ask? Only the love of one man, a man who for years had been almost an outcast, who was not good, or great, or rich. With a piteous clearness of vision, Cissy Ffoulke realized her own disinterestedness. She was not greedy, and yet the little she asked was denied her!

"Mrs. Ffoulke, such a queer thing has happened." Cynthia had come in and stood before the glass, taking off her hat.

Cissy looked at her, with sternly just eyes appreciating to the full the value and beauty of the girl's youth.

"You call it queer?" she asked, slowly.

Cynthia stared for a moment, and then blushed, suddenly.

"Oh, you have guessed? I didn't mean that! But how did you guess?"

"My dear child, I am neither blind, nor an utter fool!"

"I am rather glad you know—only, I

have not yet told father. Poor father!"

"I advise you to let Charlie tell poor father," returned Cissy, drily.

"Well, never mind that now. Only—oh, Mrs. Ffoulke, I am so happy!"

The sun came in full on her bright hair, on her smooth young skin. Cissy looked at her, scrutinizingly. Charlie loved her. For some reason, it was harder to her by far than was his old passion for Rose Trevor.

For a moment, she hated Cynthia, and the cruel fact that her revenge must fall flat, through Charlie's departure, almost took her breath away. If he had only stayed! It would have done her some good at least to see him desert Cynthia at the first sign from Trevor. And yet, as she knew, her love was in a way most unselfish. She had suffered abuse and distrust from her friends, through her loving and persistent championship of him. Only his well-known love for Rose Trevor had prevented her friendship for him from hurting her socially. In spite of all this, she was capable of ruining his happiness and that of the young girl he loved. There is nothing more utterly incomprehensible under the sun than woman-nature—unless it be man-nature.

Suddenly, Cynthia flushed a deep red, and, leaning forward, looked eagerly out of the window, over the head of her companion.

"Why, there's—no, it can't be! But it *is*—the automobile! They have come back!"

And Mrs. Ffoulke, following her glance, repeated with a heart-beat of joy:

"Yes, they have come back!"

XVI

NATURE is always artistic, always apropos. Circumstance, on the other hand, frequently blunders.

Gratwicke, who, in his way, was rather a connoisseur in events, always felt that those of the afternoon of the twenty-seventh of June, 1900, should

have taken place at night. There should have been a moon, scurrying clouds, a moaning wind; all of which accompaniments to the course of things would have been satisfactory, if a little obvious.

However, it was about four o'clock on a glowing afternoon that he stood with the bishop at the edge of the great stream, watching the little boat, the only one in the neighborhood, carry its last load of pleasure-seeking peasants to the other side. The bishop, enlightened, possibly, by some remark of Cissy Ffoulke's, had suddenly developed an annoying, if flattering, predilection for the society of the Englishman, whereas Cissy herself had linked her arm in Cynthia's and taken the girl for a walk among the olives.

Cynthia had gone without protesting. She felt that her father, as she said, smelt a rat, and she really hoped that he would follow the scent and begin the preliminary skirmish. The bridge could not be rebuilt, even in a makeshift way, for several days, and, with the practical sense that was hers, the girl felt that the sooner the war began, the sooner peace would be declared—at least, temporarily.

Gratwicke, from other reasons, had decided to inform the bishop of what had taken place, but the old man showed a surprising capability of cutting him short in a perfectly casual way, every time he began to approach the subject. The bishop was much annoyed by the turn affairs had taken, but he hated argument as much as did his daughter, and cherished a manly delusion to the effect that, if he could avoid an open discussion, and get Cynthia away, he could divert her, and cause her to forget Gratwicke.

So the two men fenced civilly as they watched the little boat crossing and recrossing, and it was not until, on its last homeward journey, the small craft suddenly ran into some hidden obstacle and promptly sank, her owner swimming back to the farther shore, that Gratwicke, choosing a moment when the bishop's interest in the

swimmer had closed his voluble lips, said, abruptly:

"Bishop Carey, I love your daughter."

"I am sorry to hear you say so, Sir Charles."

"And—she loves me."

The bishop liked the tone of his voice, in spite of himself.

"My daughter is very young," he returned, inappositely.

"She is twenty-three. I hope, sir, that you will consent to our marriage."

The bishop stared. The notorious Sir Charles Gratwicke asking for his daughter in that politely confident manner!

"I most certainly will not consent, sir, and I must say that I am surprised—surprised——"

"Surprised at my daring?"

Gratwicke's handsome eyes smiled kindly down at the indignant little man.

"My dear bishop, I understand you. I have been a bad man. I have been a prodigal, but, if you could see into my head—or my heart—you would forget all that. I assure you, sir, I am at this moment as good a man as there is in this world. Why I love Cynthia, God only knows, but I do, and, therefore—I am not unworthy of her——"

The bishop gasped, and took off his hat. It was very warm. The owner of the boat stood on the opposite bank, wringing the water out of his velveteen clothes.

"I am glad that you are—as you say. But I must, nevertheless, refuse——"

Gratwicke laid a hand on each of the speaker's shoulders.

"Now, please don't be hasty. Let me say what I have to say, first."

But he did not go on. To their left was a steep descent, at the bottom of which a narrow path led from the olive grove. Down this path hurried Luba Zoloff, followed by the young Italian. He was very much agitated, and both men on the height recalled, as they saw him, the story Cynthia had told at luncheon, of her interview with him and the Russian in the olive grove.

At the end of the path, the girl stopped and turned.

"Come," she said, impatiently, in Italian, addressing her companion as "thou," and adding something that neither the bishop nor Gratwicke understood.

The young man nodded, grimly.

"I am ready."

The girl then went and called across the river through her hollowed hands to the boatman. The man shrugged his shoulders, and pointed to the glittering, champagne-colored water.

"What? Where is your boat?" she repeated, impatiently.

The bishop was about to call down to her, but Gratwicke prevented his doing it.

Her face had turned as white as her collar.

"The boat," she stammered, in French, "the boat is sunk!"

And the boy, his face illumined with a sudden joy, repeated it after her, "The boat is sunk!" She turned and looked at him, her splendid hair blazing in the sunlight.

"Oh, you coward! Oh, you *misérable*! And I, who believed in you—that you were man enough to avenge your father and your mother! Bah!" She struck him fiercely across the face as she spoke.

He shrank back, paler than ever but for the red mark her hand had left.

"I—I am sorry, mademoiselle—I am sorry——"

He held a package done up in a gay green-and-red handkerchief, and, without answering, she took it from him.

"Sit down! Take off your boots. Hurry, there is no time to lose."

He sat down, staring at her helplessly.

"But there is no boat."

"Then you must swim," she retorted, passionately. "Hurry!"

He scrambled to his feet. "Mademoiselle, I—I can't swim."

There was a long pause, the two men above them, too much interested to reflect that they were eavesdropping, watching breathlessly. At length the girl said, slowly:

"You can't swim?"

"No. I don't know how."

"Swear it! Swear it, on your mother's soul!"

"I swear by my mother's soul, that I cannot!"

"Then," she said, slowly, "give me—it!"

He handed her the package, which seemed to be a box, and she set it down and opened it, her back to the onlookers, so that they could not see what it contained. A second later, however, she turned again, something knotted carefully in the brilliant handkerchief.

"Hold it."

With a swift movement, she loosened her hair, and shook it down her back. Then, skilfully, quietly, she fastened the newly made package on her head, tying the ends of the kerchief under her chin, and fastening it further with a gold pin from her belt. Then she gathered her hair once more into a big, flat knot on her crown, almost covering the kerchief, except for the ends.

"What—what are you going to do?" asked the boy, nervously.

"To do?" she laughed. "I can swim, my dearest! Good-bye."

As she spoke, she flung off her long skirt, and stood in a short one, reaching only to her knees.

"Miss Zoloff!"

She looked up. "Ah, it is you, Sir Charles Gratwicke? Well—good-bye!"

"You must not try to swim the river! It is nonsense!"

"Ah, yes, nonsense! Good-bye!" She ran swiftly out into deep water, and turned. "Tell—Harry—good-bye, for me."

Gratwicke, who could not reach the water from where he stood, owing to a thick growth of thorns between him and it, slid hurriedly down the steep ravine to where the boy still stood. As he reached the bottom, his foot caught in a root, and he fell, wrenching his knee badly. Struggling to his feet, he called to the boy to help him, but his answer was a sudden and surprising

blow on the head that dazed him. When he had recovered, it was too late.

The bishop, dancing about on the bluff, pointed a bright spot in the river out to him.

"There she is! God help us, she will drown!"

Gratwicke, still giddy and sick from his blow, dragged off his boots and made for the water. The red spot bobbed about now, helpless in the current. The sun shone gloriously; the sky was as blue as a turquoise.

Half an hour later, Gratwicke came back, towing, by her skirt, the girl, whose body had caught in a floating tree. The bishop and the boy met him and helped him, half-exhausted as he was, to climb out of the water. The boy had made no attempt to run away; he had stood looking on, without a word. Gratwicke laid his burden down, and stretched his arms.

"Now, then, you," he said, in French, "explain it."

"I have nothing to explain."

"Why did you strike me?"

"So you couldn't prevent her from going."

"She went in your place?"

"Yes."

"To do what?"

"I cannot tell."

"You must tell. Either now, or later."

"How—later?"

"At the inquest."

The boy clasped and unclasped his hands, nervously.

"Would that get into the papers?"

"Of course it would. You had better tell us."

"Come, Gratwicke, you must get back to the inn—two such drenchings in one day are no joke. I will stay with the poor girl."

Gratwicke nodded.

"Yes. Only, first I must take what she has on her head."

Kneeling, he unfastened her wet hair, and removed the kerchief. Opening it, he took out a small revolver and a box of cartridges, done up in oiled silk.

"My God!" exclaimed the bishop.

Gratwicke turned to the boy.

"You were to have carried these?"

"Yes."

"You were to have killed—whom?"

Then, suddenly, his weak nerves gone to pieces in a second, after hours and days of a fearful strain, the boy broke down, and told the story.

He was to shoot the king, that evening, during the festivities at the station. It had been arranged in Milan that the attempt was to be made during June, while the king was traveling in the mountains, and Luba Zoloff, who was a leader in the small band of nihilists in Milan, was to be told the exact time when the king should be at some definite place. The boy, who was twenty-two and an illuminator of parchment by profession, was chosen to do the deed, as he hated the king for having refused to pardon his father and mother for a murder years before, and had begged to be given the chance for revenge.

Luba had received word by telegram that the king was to pass the station that evening, and had given him the pistol and cartridges. Then he had lost his courage, and had tried to retreat. It was, after all, too dreadful to kill a man. He couldn't do it. *She* would have done it—The young man broke down, looking at the quiet face surrounded by the dripping red hair, at his feet.

"God have mercy on her soul!" he added, crossing himself.

And the bishop, who held his hat in his hand, added, quietly:

"Amen."

XVII

Two hours later, the body of Luba Zoloff lay on her narrow bed, covered with roses, candles burning at her head and feet, and on her breast a crucifix.

Cynthia Carey, the daughter of a Protestant bishop, had taken the crucifix from the wall and laid it between the dead girl's quiet hands, and her father, knowing the story, said nothing.

Welter, to whom Gratwicke had broken the news of Luba's death, came in, and stood a long time at the foot of the bed, and then laid, just over her heart, a little bunch of forget-me-nots. Then he went quietly to his room and closed the door.

"Bishop," said Gratwicke, joining the old man in the garden, whither he had come on leaving the death-chamber, "must we tell Welter?"

"No," returned the bishop. "We will not tell him. He loved her. No one need ever know."

After a pause, he went on:

"The boy has gone, Gratwicke. I gave him some money, and he is going to Genoa, to sail for South America. He is afraid to stay in Italy, and he has a sister in Brazil. He is also going to die. I had no business to let him go——"

There was promise of much obstinacy in the old man's voice.

"I am glad you did. Otherwise, I should have had to do it myself," returned Gratwicke, repressing a smile.

"Gratwicke, you are nearly drowned, too. Drink some of this. It is good."

The bishop's flask was silver, and had a neat little patent cover. Gratwicke drank, and thanked him.

It was a beautiful evening. The snow-peaks were like heaps of rose-leaves; purple shadows clung around the trees; a bell in the valley rang for the angelus; one star had come out. Suddenly the bishop stopped in his occupation of picking roses, and turned. "Hear that?" It was a nightingale, in the depths of a clump of cypresses.

"*Riverenza*, dinner is served." Vincenzo stood by them. "Ah, a nightingale. Noisy bird!"

The two men followed him, reluctantly, into the house.

Welter did not come down to dinner, and the little party sat together at one end of the long room. They were rather silent, for they all thought of the girl in the room above. Cissy Ffoulke watched Gratwicke, unceas-

ingly. He looked very tired, but his eyes were happy. The bishop was thoughtful, quite forgetting to eat his macaroni. Cynthia glanced at him anxiously from time to time.

Suddenly, a sound of voices came in through the corridor, and Vincenzo rushed out of the room. "*Excel-lenza*," they heard him say, and then, a shrill woman's voice, speaking French: "But the best rooms you have for madame—nothing else will do."

Gratwicke and Cissy Ffoulke, looking up, met each other's eyes.

Then the door opened, and Rose Trevor came in, walking with the slow grace for which she had been famous for years. She wore a long pongee coat and a flat hat draped with several veils. As she passed the table, she put up a short gold lorgnon, and glanced carelessly at its occupants.

Gratwicke, whose back was to her, did not move. Mrs. Trevor sat down at a small table by the window, and threw back her veils, one after another. She was dyed, painted, powdered; but, even yet, she was one of the most beautiful of women. Vincenzo, who came mincing in to give her her soup, almost spilt it over her, instead, as he saw her face.

Cynthia stared, unaffectedly; the bishop frowned, and stole another glance; Cissy drew a deep breath. Gratwicke, his face perfectly white, went on with his salad. Cissy could have screamed with satisfaction. Any one, she felt, would be better than Cynthia, and her telegram, telling of the impending engagement, had brought the only person who could break that engagement, now an established fact.

"Ah, Sir Charles, is that you?"

Mrs. Trevor's voice was as perfect as in the days of her earliest youth.

Gratwicke rose, deliberately. "How do you do?" he said, going to her table, and holding out his hand.

Rose Trevor had loved him; more than any one else in the world, she had loved the man who had so cheerfully ruined himself for her. And

now, some one—a woman, of course—had told her that he was engaged. She raised her great eyes to his.

"Dear!" she said, under her breath.

Gratwicke looked at her fixedly for a second. Then he drew a deep sigh of relief. Shaking his head almost imperceptibly, he said, in a low voice:

"Good-bye!"

She understood.

"Ah?"

"Yes. Thank God!"

He went back to his place, and sat down, and a few minutes later she left the room.

"How in the name of goodness did she get here?" asked Cissy, at length, comfortably. She had not heard the short conversation between Trevor and Gratwicke.

"Vincenzo, how arrive, the lady?"

Vincenzo grinned. "The Signor Conte del Valle, in Marsina—he has a boat, the signor conte, and an automobile. The lady came to our bridge this afternoon; no bridge; determined to come—poor Vincenzo his humble inn much liked!—so back they go to Marsina, and the *signor conte* bring them——"

The bishop sent his daughter to fetch his pipe, as they left the table.

Outside, in the dusk, stood a great yellow automobile, and in it sat a man.

"Buona sera, signor conte." Vincenzo rushed by, very important, with a tray laden with coffee-cups.

There were trunks in the auto, and bags and wraps were being handed up by a servant in livery. Another servant held a loudly yapping, white lap-dog.

Cynthia, coming down-stairs, met Mrs. Trevor, who stopped her.

"So you are engaged to Charlie Gratwicke?" the actress said, gently.

"Really—I——"

"I am Rose Trevor, my dear. It may interest you to know that I came on purpose to see him, and that—he will have nothing to do with me! You are not very pretty——"

Cynthia was too happy to be ungenerous.

"No, I am not pretty, and you are as beautiful as—as——"

"As an angel"? Well, good-bye. I hope you will be happy. Tell him that. I really do hope you may both be happy."

With a little nod, she went on down-stairs, and, when Cynthia came out on the terrace a moment later, she was gone.

Cissy Ffoulke was frightened when, during the above conversation, Gratwicke joined her.

"Oh!" she said, faintly.

But he was smiling.

"I have to thank you, Cissy, for the only thing I needed to make me perfectly happy. The absolute knowledge that Rose Trevor was no more to me than—any other woman. So, we'll say no more about your having sent for her."

He left her, still smiling, and, without a word, she crept up to her room.

She had failed, Trevor had failed—what had won? Was it love? Or was it, simply—youth?

And she was ashamed, and she was sorry. She liked Cynthia, and Cynthia would make Char happy—oh, tomorrow she would surely be glad!

As she passed the room where the dead girl lay, Adalgisa came out, with red eyes.

"I have been saying a prayer for her," the woman said, "for her soul. The *signora* is going to do the same."

Cissy went in and knelt by the bed. She had no particular religion, and she had cared nothing for the Russian, but death is death.

At length, she rose, tears streaming down her cheeks. She had prayed that Gratwicke and Cynthia might be happy.

XVIII

"GRATWICKE, I have been thinking of the parable of the prodigal son."

The bishop's voice was unsteady.

"I am not a prodigal son, bishop; I have no father."

"And lo, when he beheld him—'Gratwicke, you have saved many of

God's children to-day; you have risked your life thoughtlessly for others——"

"Bishop, ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have done that."

"And—well, I believe in you," went on the old man, hastily. "I will not

let you have my girl yet; you must wait a year, but during that year, I, too, shall hope."

"Cynthia, come with me into the garden; there is a nightingale——"



ALL CORRECT

AN antiseptic baby lived on antiseptic milk;
His clothes were antiseptic, made of antiseptic silk.
In antiseptic carriages he rode, with time to spare.
He had an antiseptic nurse, breathed antiseptic air.
And though upon this mundane sphere he did not long abide
They placed him in an antiseptic coffin when he died.



HIS SOLICITUDE

"MAMA, can God hear everything?"

"Everything, Willie."

"And is God always happy?"

"Always, Willie. Why do you ask?"

"Well, I should think it would make Him suffer a little to hear what sister and that fellow of hers are saying to each other in the next room."



THE WONDERFUL EFFECT

HE—Didn't my proposal fairly take you off your feet?

SHE—Well, you know I have been in your lap ever since.



A MAGNATE is known by the trust company he keeps.

THE BOLD GHOST

THE year was young, but the place was old,
 And the house had gone to sleep,
 And the ghost that came by night was bold,
 For the silence was so deep.

Aloud he called to his heart's fair queen,
 But she would not unbar the door,
 And the window from which she used to lean
 Stirred at her touch no more.

In vain through the empty night he cried,
 But there came no answering tone;
 And then he bethought him that since he died
 A hundred years had flown.

But a hundred years should have brought more near
 The Love that he loved so well;
 And the bold ghost's heart turned cold with fear—
 Where was the old-time spell?

Had she forgotten what he held fast?—
 They say 'tis a woman's way;
 Was it only a dream that Love could last,
 The dream of an idle day?

From the silent house the bold ghost turned—
 Why dream that a dream is true?—
 Ashes were where Love's fire once burned;
 Death's meaning at last he knew.

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.



HER GREATEST FEAR

MAY—Miss Antique doesn't like fast men.

ELLA—I suppose she's afraid they will get away from her.



AN OPTIMIST

HUSBAND—There! I have just paid up all our bills.

WIFE—Never mind, darling. I'll have a new lot for you soon.

THE LAST DITCH

By Ruth Kimball Gardiner

I WAS seventeen when Lucy married my whole family. We thought at the time that she had married merely my brother Bob, but that was because we didn't know Lucy. We soon found out better. Nell and Madge and I had made up our minds to go in for careers, but Lucy changed all that. She dragged Nell out of college in her junior year, and married her to a stock-broker. She hunted Madge from studio to studio, till she ran her into a corner, and tied her up to a cavalry captain. Then she began on me.

I held out till the last ditch. The last ditch, in my case—and I don't mean to say anything unkind, though the man was an utterly impossible person who wore green cravats—yawned before me, and I yawned before it—or him, rather—for one whole season. Then Lucy began to drag up her heavy artillery, and I ran away.

Madge and her captain were in San Francisco, and I dropped in on them, without warning, just in time to see them off for Manila. Madge told me I might just as well give in first as last, and that I'd better go back home and let Lucy dispose of me as she saw fit; but, when I thought of those green cravats, I simply couldn't. On the way to the steamer, Madge remembered that Mary Cargill was at San Diego, and said I'd better go down and stay there till I could see my way clear to returning to Lucy. On top of this, Lucy wired that the last ditch was on his way to San Francisco. That settled it. I telegraphed Mary that I was coming, and the next train carried me South.

It was on the ferry going over to Oakland that I first saw the Unspeakable Being. He wore a curled mustache, and a diamond scarf-pin, and he offered me biscuits to feed to the gulls. Of course, everybody knows that manners are more free in California than they are in the East, but even in California one doesn't wish to be really cordial to beings who curl their mustaches and wear diamonds, so I buttoned myself into the coffin-like seclusion of my berth the minute the train started.

I was feeling uncommonly helpless and unprotected and sorry for myself. I'd never been about alone before, and Lucy has always impressed on me that unmarried females—Lucy has an old-fashioned vocabulary—are decidedly at a disadvantage away from home. Lucy thinks there is something inherently indelicate in the idea of a woman of five-and-twenty going about with nothing on her visiting-card but the name she was born to. She says that the consciousness of possessing a husband, even if he is thousands of miles away, is the greatest help in the world to a woman when she is traveling.

I had plenty of time to think about Lucy's ideas before I got to San Diego, for one Western town is always at least a thousand miles from another Western town. I saw that curled mustache ready to grin at me every time I raised my eyes, and I began to think that I'd never been so fond of anybody in my life as I was going to be of Mary Cargill.

There was nobody to meet me at the San Diego station. The diamond

scarf-pin asked me if he might see me to my home, but I assured him that my friends lived forty miles out on a ranch, and I climbed into the first wheeled thing I saw, and told the driver to drive to Major Cargill's.

We found the house after we had raced pretty much all over San Diego, and, to my dismay, nobody was at home but a Chinese cook. The driver managed to make out that the Cargills had gone to Honolulu, or St. Petersburg, or into the fourth dimension, or somewhere else. Of course, that sort of a shock serves one perfectly right for coming when one isn't expected, but, for the moment, I was ready to shed tears. I didn't know a soul in all California, and I was alone.

That is how I happened to go to Coronado. If I live a thousand years, I shall never forget the agony of the moment when the trolley-car set me down in front of the hotel, and I knew that I had to face a whole houseful of perfect strangers, without the consciousness of being married to give me self-possession. There were golf girls and men on the verandas, and battalions of women with fancy-work, and they all stared at me as I slunk in. I had never before been to a hotel alone in all my life, and I thought of Lucy's stories of the way unattached women are regarded.

A lovely, comforting idea struck me as I walked into the office. There was nobody within a thousand miles who knew me. Why shouldn't I avail myself of the protection of a husband's name if I chose? I dramatized the whole situation in half a second, and, as I went along, I added details to give the story verisimilitude. If a husband, why not other male members of a family? Why, as the Italians say, be economical with anything so cheap and useful as a lie?

I went right up to the desk, and wrote my name down on the register:

Mrs. William H. Brown, Philadelphia.

I chose that name because I hadn't time to think of anything else,

and "William Brown" is what one might call generic. I put in the "H" because it made the name sound more complete, and I said "Philadelphia" because Philadelphia has such a reassuringly respectable look. Then I added one of the corroborative details that had occurred to me.

"My brother-in-law and his wife are to join me here," I explained. "Kindly let me know when they arrive. The name is Robert E. Brown."

I don't know why I said brother-in-law, unless it was that I didn't want to drag in any more surnames, and I might just as well have said father-in-law, or first cousin; but it really didn't matter what relation I claimed, for a perfectly ghastly thing happened. The clerk quickly turned to the preceding page of the register.

"Mr. Brown arrived last night," he said. "Shall I send him word you are here?"

My knees clicked together like castanets, but I managed to gurgle:

"Oh, no! I'll send my card to him after I have rested a little."

I don't know how I got to the room they gave me. I bolted the door, and then I just dropped on the bed, and—sozzled! There I was, in a perfectly lovely place, where I might have stayed forever if I hadn't put in that corroborative detail. What on earth I ever did it for, I don't know. Lucy says that an unattached female can't possibly get herself into a hotel unless she—I think Lucy says she has to send on letters of reference beforehand, or something like that, but I don't believe it. There must be thousands and thousands of unmarried women of five-and-twenty who go about from hotel to hotel as they please, though I don't know anything about how they manage it, and Lucy may be right.

At any rate, I wished I had stuck to the truth, or, at least, that I hadn't put in that touch about the brother-in-law. If I went near the office, the clerk would be sure to bring out the man, and then what on earth could I say? The more I thought of it, the

worse it seemed. I saw that I'd have to sneak out of the hotel as soon as I could, and when I looked out of my window at the palms and the flowers and the sea and the people bathing and the golf girls and men strolling about the beach, I couldn't help crying. I'd have to go back to Lucy and the last ditch, and when I thought of the green cravats, I stopped crying. Never! I'd stay right there at Coronado, and dodge the brother-in-law as long as I could. Perhaps he'd go away, or perhaps I could think up some story to tell the clerk to account for our not recognizing each other. Perhaps I could work up something plausible about our being separated in our infancy, or—well, I ordered my dinner sent to my room, and took the night to think things over.

The hack-driver had told me of an excursion down into Mexico that I might take and give myself one day of grace. If Robert E. Brown was a man of any standing in the world, he couldn't possibly hang around a Winter resort every day doing nothing. He might be a business man staying there only a day or two, or he might be a confirmed invalid, and, in that case, I could steer clear of him easily. At any rate, I made up my mind not to start back home till circumstances forced me out of Coronado.

I breakfasted in my room on five different kinds of fresh fruit, and then I stole out of the hotel by a side exit, and took the trolley-car down the long avenue of palms to the San Diego ferry.

I managed to find the terminal station of the little tram-way that runs down to the Mexican boundary, and climbed into a shabby old car, with a number of tourists in bobbed-off skirts and blue veils, and an air of wanting to see everything for the sake of being able to say that they had seen it, as the saying is. The party was personally conducted by a saddle-colored man with an overcoat and a Mexican-straw sombrero. He smiled at me in a friendly way, and remarked that it was a fine day. He said it in a kind of

English, but I made answer in my very best Castilian:

"No es verdad?"

I don't know whether that was the right thing to say or not, but it's all the Spanish I know except *"mañana,"* and *"Eso ni me va,"* and *"A otro perro con ese hueso,"* and none of those remarks seemed to suit the case. Anyhow, I was sorry I'd said anything at all, a minute later, for a man in the seat behind me leaned forward, and said:

"Que tiene Usted?" That nigger ain't a greaser. He can't *'hablar'* a bit. He came from Cleveland."

There just behind me was the Unspeakable Being of the curled mustache and the diamond scarf-pin. I could see that he recognized me, and that nothing but the intervention of sudden death could keep him from talking to me. The car rattled and banged along through orange-groves and olive-orchards, and the eyes under every one of those blue veils rested on me with unconcealed disapproval. Every other woman in the car had some friend or kinsman with her, and there I was, all alone, with that curled mustache grinning more and more familiarly every minute. A woman with a fat, good-natured face occupied the other half of my seat, and that was some comfort, but, after a little while, the car stopped at a way-station, and she left me. I turned quite sick, knowing that in another moment that curled mustache would plump itself down beside me. There was no help for it. I stared stonily out of the window. Then I heard a strange voice saying:

"Why, fancy finding you, of all people, here! I didn't see you till this moment. How do you do, and when did you come out?"

I looked up. There in the aisle stood a man I had never before seen, but he was unmistakably the kind of man I've always known—the kind of man I've danced with and walked with and talked with ever since Lucy brought me out.

"May I sit here?" he asked; and, as he took the seat, he managed to say:

"I beg your pardon for the liberty, but that beast behind you——"

Really, I could have hugged that man, then and there. He went on talking about the orange crop, and the San José scale, and the climate, and the weather, and dear only knows what else, and I just sat still and basked in the comfort of feeling that I was no longer at the mercy of curled mustaches and diamond scarf-pins, and eyes under blue veils. I had somebody from my own world to look after me, for the moment, at least, and I gradually regained my composure till, by the time the crazy old train stopped just north of the Mexican border, we were chatting together as if we had met under a friend's roof, instead of in a California tram-car.

The saddle-colored man packed us, blue veils and all, into two stages, and I saw the curled mustache on the seat with the driver of the first stage before the man from my world handed me into the second.

If you can imagine a strip of the New Jersey coast where there is no water, no cottage, no boardwalk and not a bit of grass, you have a picture of the corner of Mexico into which we presently rattled. There were a few shabby cotton-woods along the low banks of what would have been a river if there had been any water in it, there was a granite boundary monument, protected from souvenir-collectors by a fence of iron pickets, a little cactus, and the rest was sand and desolation. One of the blue veils remarked that Mexico wasn't much to see, but it was something to be able to say one had seen it, and the rest of the party seemed to agree with her.

Our destination was the village of Tia Juana, which is Spanish for "Aunt Jane." Tia Juana is a side-show for the big tent of California. It has a shop or two, in which one buys Mexican drawn work and belts and paper fans for a little less than twice the price one pays in Fifth avenue, and there is a post-office kept alive by the post-cards of relays of blue veils.

The curled mustache was in the offing all the while, and the man from my world kept him hull down. Not one of the blue veils was so care-free and gay as I was. I loaded myself down with flag stick-pins and scraps of rough turquoise, and I bought a dozen post-cards and mailed them to members of Lucy's family. It was something, after all, to be in Mexico, snapping my fingers at Lucy and the last ditch. Lucy couldn't possibly know from the post-card that I was only a few miles from my native land, for Tia Juana isn't on any map I ever saw, and Lucy hasn't the faintest idea of geography west of Pittsburg. The man from my world let me take his fountain-pen so that I might write the postals, and when I'd quite finished, he said he'd send off a few, also. I knew he meant me to see both the addresses and the signature. It was a delicate way of letting me know something about himself. I watched him write, and by the time he had addressed four cards, I saw that at least he knew the names and addresses of some of the right kind of people. When he turned the cards over and wrote his name on the back of the first, I could have given a war-whoop on the spot.

"Robert E. Brown," was the name he signed.

"Are you the Mr. Brown who is staying at Coronado?" I gasped.

"I came last night," he said. "Are you staying there, too?"

"Yes," I answered. "I noticed your name on the register. It's—it's the same as mine, you know."

He lifted his eyebrows just a little.

"I am Mrs. William Brown," I said.

My first impulse had been to tell him the truth about myself, but I didn't see quite how I was going to explain about the alias on the register, and, besides, Lucy has taught me never to act on impulse. I couldn't but see the look of disappointment that flashed into his eyes when I said the "Mrs.," and for the next half-hour I saw that nothing but his fine courtesy kept him from asking me point-blank whether

William Brown was a personage in the past or present tense.

I told him that I had missed the Cargills, and that I didn't know a soul at Coronado. He said that he knew several people there, and that he even had an invalid aunt who would be charmed to know me.

It was the invalid aunt that finished me. I hadn't a twinge of conscience about deceiving a hotel clerk, and I didn't feel very badly over the false impression I had given Mr. Brown, but I couldn't bear to deceive an invalid aunt. Besides, there was the clerk, likely to pop up at any moment and mention to Mr. Brown that I was a sister-in-law.

I thought the matter over all the way from Tia Juana back to San Diego. I turned it over in my mind as we crossed the ferry, and I arrived at the farther shore and my determination simultaneously.

"Mr. Brown," I said, desperately, "I've been telling falsehoods. My name isn't Brown, and it isn't 'Mrs.' at all."

Mr. Brown laughed.

"I knew it wasn't Brown," he said. "I saw the name you signed to the post-cards; but I wasn't sure about the 'Mrs.'"

"I don't know what you'll think of me," I went on, "but I told the hotel clerk I was Mrs. Brown, because, when a woman is traveling alone, it seems so much more dignified and conventional to be married."

Mr. Brown looked as if he wanted to laugh again, but all he said was that what I had done was only what any

right-minded woman might be expected to do under the circumstances. This made me feel dreadfully about the rest of it, but I knew I had to tell the whole story.

"And I thought it would seem so much more as if I were accustomed to having somebody look out for me, and not to roaming about alone in strange hotels, if I said I expected some man relative to meet me there, you know," I went on to explain.

"And so you told the clerk you expected your husband to join you?" asked Mr. Brown; and he chuckled gleefully as he said it.

This was so much worse than the truth that I gave a jump.

"Oh, no!" I said. "I told him my brother-in-law would meet me, and I said his name was—I suppose you'll think me hopelessly idiotic—I said the name was Mr. Robert E. Brown."

"Oh, my aunt!" shouted Mr. Brown; and, from the way he said it, I don't think he had reference to his kinswoman at Coronado at all. He just whooped it out, and then he sat down on a bench, and laughed madly.

The invalid aunt is a dear. I took to her from the first. I hope Lucy will like her. I don't suppose I shall ever have a genuine brother-in-law named Brown, unless something happens to Nell's stock-broker, or to Madge's captain; but Bob will, and so will Lucy. The last ditch was an angel in disguise. If it hadn't been for his green cravats, I'd never have seen Coronado at all.



THE RIGHT KIND

SHAWTER—What sort of a girl to be engaged to is Miss Polkadot?

VAWTER—First rate, and square as a die! The last time I was engaged to her, she returned my ring and presents within three days, and got up a farewell dinner in my honor.

FLORA IN URBE

AMID the slush and mud and noise
 That choke the city's thoroughfare,
 They hawk these bits of fragrant joys:
 Arbutus blooming everywhere.
 Rude Winter struts the city street,
 The wild March gusts howl to and fro,
 But clear, though faint, a perfume sweet
 Proclaims Our Lady of the Snow.

From some wild Carolinian wood
 Where Spring has paused and wild bee hums,
 A gladness scarcely understood,
 To our chill North she comes—she comes!
 Her timid tints have brought a smile
 To Nature's face, long white with woe;
 Our hearts sing "*Ave!*" all the while:
 Hail, little Virgin of the Snow!

The Aryan in us makes his hymn
 For Winter's passing, in a tongue
 Forgotten since the ages dim
 When all the flowered world was young.
 Old faiths revive, new doubts recede,
 Strange voices whisper soft and low,
 And every soul of every creed
 Worships Our Lady of the Snow.

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



HEAVY

COBWIGGER—Does it require much ability to run an auto?

MERRITT—That depends. When it breaks down it takes a fellow with plenty of push to get it home.



THE UNEXPECTED

TED—Was there any accident at the hunt?

NED—Yes; they killed the fox.

THE WOMAN IN POSSESSION

By Richard Le Gallienne

“I DON'T know how you put up with it. If I were you I should tear his eyes out,” exclaimed Ruth Darley's most intimate friend, as she entered Mrs. Darley's boudoir for a little visit one April afternoon.

“Why, what's the matter, dear?” asked Mrs. Darley, and then immediately understanding: “Oh, you mean Francis . . . that's all right.”

As Mrs. Martha Stenning had rung the bell a smart automobile was standing at the door, and in the hall she had come upon Mr. Darley laughingly leaving the house with an exceedingly pretty and smart young woman. The two were obviously very much occupied with each other, and the spin they were about to take together was likely to be exceedingly cozy.

“Francis's latest inspiration girl, is that it?” said Ruth, her beautiful black eyes smiling serenely from a face that radiated a happiness secure as the fixed stars. “Don't upset yourself about her, dear Martha. Francis and I understand each other . . .”

“Who is she?” asked Martha, by no means placated.

“Oh, she is a little actress playing at the Comedy. Didn't you think her charming? I'm afraid she is not much of an actress. She is one of those actresses, you know, who talk Maeterlinck and Pater—instead of acting, and poor dear Francis likes that, you know. A girl has only to be pretty and talk about the Mona Lisa, and Francis is lost . . .”

“The Mona Lisa at this time of day! I suppose the girl comes from the provinces. Dear heaven, how

sick one is of the Mona Lisa! If I were a man I should prefer a woman with a courageous taste for Marie Corelli . . .”

“I believe that is one of the reasons why Francis loves me,” laughed Ruth, who, though the wife of a famous poet and dramatist, made no pretense of being “literary” or “artistic,” in the cant sense of those much abused words. She was enough of a reader to enjoy Balzac—and her husband's own writings, of which he truthfully averred she was the best critic—and that is quite enough “literature” for an author's wife. To Francis Darley's great comfort, his wife did not possess “the artistic temperament.” Two artistic temperaments in one house would be a menace to the neighbors. But Darley knew who it was that read his nature, and understood every little law of his being, as no one else in the world knew and understood them; and, however his fancy, and even his tongue, might sometimes be carried away, his heart was safe in Ruth Darley's keeping, as Ruth well knew, and smiled accordingly.

“Yes! but how can you stand it?” said Martha, returning to the main theme. “Why! if Mark were to . . .”

“Mark is different.”

“How different?”

“Mark is not a poet.”

“Thank heaven, no!” ejaculated Martha.

“Francis,” continued Ruth, smiling, “is a great poet. Mark is—a great husband! Now Francis, whatever you may think, is a good husband—but he is not exactly a great husband—not a

born husband, so to say, as he is a born poet."

"I should like to know your definition of a good husband," rejoined Martha. "It must be rather original."

"A good husband is a man who needs you, and knows it—and does not forget it."

"And a great husband?" queried Martha.

"Is one who needs no one else."

"You are easily satisfied, Ruth," commented her friend, "and your definition is certainly not romantic. 'A man who needs you'! How prosaic living with a poet has made you! I want to be loved—not to be needed."

"To be needed is to be loved," answered Ruth, sententiously. "Need is the only love that lasts, and the deeper the need the deeper the love. Men need all kind of things in woman. They need our beauty, and, should that go, and we possess nothing else they need, their love necessarily goes, too. They also very much need the mother and nurse in us, and the wife that holds a man is hardly less of a mother to her husband than to her children. There is no baby to compare with a big, grown-up husband."

"That is all very well, so long as he only needs *us*. It is his needing some one else as well that I object to. . . . Why should Francis need to be gadding about with little actresses and such like, when he has a wife as young and pretty as you at home?"

"Because, as I said before, Francis is a poet."

"I don't see what difference that makes. Why should a poet be more polygamous than your average man?"

"I don't believe he is," said Ruth, stoutly, "but in his case you hear about it, and in the case of the average man you don't. Your average man, for one thing, is more of a hypocrite, and, for another, less interesting to the gossips. Besides, something comes of a poet's love-affairs—Heine's love-songs, for instance—whereas the love-affairs of your average man are mere hoggish self-indulgence."

"You weren't always so philosophical, Ruth."

"No," and Ruth's black eyes flashed for a moment with a certain memory, "because I didn't always know Francis as well as I do now. I admit that once it would have broken my heart to see him go off like this. I should have thought our love was at an end, and been ready for all kinds of jealous revenges. I nearly left him once on account of an affair really no more serious than this, and it was seeing how suddenly and completely it passed away that taught me my lesson. Afterward I grew to feel quite sorry for the girl, as, living with him day by day, I noticed how completely, and how unconsciously he had forgotten her. His power of forgetting, or rather of doing without people, sometimes frightens me. It is so quiet and absolute, so silently a part of him. He seems to care for people, not as individuals, but as sensations—for the effect they produce in him. They exist for him only so long as they produce the effect he desires. I don't think he is quite conscious of this, and, in fact, imagines himself a devoted friend to any number of people—but I think I'm right, and anyhow I know it's like that with what he calls his inspiration girls . . ."

"Inspiration girls indeed!" fumed Martha, by no means convinced by Ruth's long speech; "why cannot he stay at home and get his inspiration from his wife?"

"For the same reason, dear Martha, that a painter needs a change of models occasionally . . ."

"Thank heaven I am not a painter's wife," interjected Martha, irrelevantly. "Think what the wives of those painters from the nude must suffer . . ."

"Martha, you are adorable," laughed Ruth, kissing her friend, "but I'm glad you said that, because it helps me to explain poor Francis better. You know that those painters you speak of only look upon their models with a purely professional eye . . ."

"They say so—but does any one believe them?"

"No doubt there are exceptions," said Ruth, smiling, "but in the main I think it's true. I understand how it may be through Francis—for, however much he may call himself in love with this or that inspiration girl, I notice that he is even more in love with the verses she inspires . . ."

"It is enough to make one give up reading poetry, when one thinks of the horrible processes of its production," said Martha, with a shudder.

"Like *pâté de foie gras*, or osprey plumes, eh?" laughed Ruth, mischievously. "Well, if you love poetry, and particularly if you love a poet, you have to overlook the process."

"I could never do it," said Martha, decisively.

"Oh, yes! you could," said Ruth. "It is a part of her *métier de femme* for a wife to adapt herself to her husband's profession, whatever it may be. Besides, if Francis were to stop falling in love, we should starve. Without the stimulus of some new face, his brain would stagnate; for it is the novelty of the thing—not the thing itself—that makes the inspiration. Why now, come, Martha! in a lesser degree we all experience the same thing when we have a little flirtation with a new man at dinner. How bright we suddenly become, and we say a hundred clever things we should certainly never say at home, dumbly dining with the best of husbands. Daily life together strengthens the roots of love, and fills the branches with fruit, but it necessarily shakes down the blossom."

"Life cannot be all blossom," commented Martha, with solid wisdom.

"True enough, dear moralist, but you must have noticed that by the time the blossom has turned to fruit, the birds have stopped singing."

"You are incorrigible, Ruth. To think of you standing up for Francis in this way, and to think how he is spending his time this very minute . . ."

"Dear Francis!" said Ruth, half to herself, her eyes growing soft with tenderness. "I think I know pretty well what he is doing, and could almost tell

you what he is saying. Let's see—it's just half-past four. They've been gone about an hour. Yes! they'll be well into Surrey by this, and have probably stopped at some little country inn for tea. There is one I know of with a quaint old garden, winding box hedges, and Summer-houses in quiet corners. They will probably have tea brought out into one of these, as it is such a sunny afternoon. On the way along, they have almost certainly been discussing what is politely called the necessity of the artist to live his, or her, own life—with a gentle accent on the *her* (for she, you must remember, being an actress, is very much of an 'artist')—the necessity of the artist to live his or her own life untrammelled by conventions . . ."

"Without regard to common decency," amended Martha.

"Be quiet, Martha, and don't interrupt the clairvoyant. He has also been telling her, so as to give a respectable air to their flirtation, as well as to set her at her ease, what an angel I am, and how perfectly I understand his nature, and allow him his own way. She has said how exquisite she thinks me, and how she couldn't bear that their—their—friendship should cause me a moment's pain. These decent preliminaries agreed upon, they may now begin to play the game with a clear conscience . . ."

"Ruth, you are quite horrible . . ."

"Hush, they are sitting in one of the little arbors waiting for the tea, and he is leaning over the table looking into her eyes. They are both silent a long while. His hand rests on hers upon the table. Now he is speaking: 'If only we had met earlier . . .' he has said—without a quiver of a humorous muscle, perhaps sincerely forgetting that he has said exactly the same thing at least a thousand times before. She pats his hand, deprecatingly. 'You mustn't say that,' she says. 'Oh, it is no disloyalty to Ruth,' he hastens to explain. 'I love her very truly. But I love her differently. There are so many ways of loving. We love one

for certain qualities, and another for other qualities. What I give you is not taken away from Ruth. The love I feel for you is something different—well, because it is for you. . . . Here they suddenly unlock hands, and adopt a correct attitude of admiration of the rural prospect—for the tea-tray is approaching”

“About time,” fairly snorts poor Martha. “Why, Ruth, how can you!”

“Don’t be so unsympathetic, Martha. See, she is pouring out the tea for them. ‘How many lumps? Milk or cream?’ Her expression is almost domestic. It is so dear to be playing at home together—even in so timid a way. Neither speaks of this, but there is an implication of it in their manner toward each other. ‘Ah! well’ sighs Francis, presently, with unutterable meaning. ‘We must be brave,’ says the girl, with wifely tenderness. ‘Yes! yes!’ says Francis, ‘but oh, the tragic complexity of our poor human lives! What tangled webs they are. How we miss each other, or meet too late.’ ‘Never mind,’ says she, bravely, ‘it is something to have met at all—even like this.’ ‘Yes! it is something,’ and Francis again takes refuge in the unutterable. ‘Who gave you that ring?’ asks the girl, presently. ‘Ruth,’ says Francis, blushing apologetically. Tears suddenly glitter in those wonderful eyes. Francis presses close to console her, his face wearing an expression of the tenderest concern. It is terrible to see her suffer so. But how brave she is with her little handkerchief. ‘And now suppose we go for a walk. There are some charming woods close by—and then we can have dinner at the inn, and so back to town in the moonlight’”

“And you call that being married?” cried Martha, with something like virtuous indignation at what she regarded as Ruth Darley’s levity.

“No! I call it being married—to a poet,” laughed Ruth.

“But tell me,” said Martha, after a while, “about that little inspiration girl

that made your eyes flash so, a few minutes ago.”

“It is all so past and gone—it is silly to recall it,” answered Ruth.

“Never mind. I want to hear. Besides, a woman’s past is always so much more interesting than her present.”

“Oh, all right, then,” began Ruth.

“She was a dainty little thing, and had what poor Francis calls ‘a certain strange charm’ to which he is susceptible—I call it a certain clawish fascination, a kind of green-eyed, moon-struck prettiness, which, I have noticed, repels the sane, healthy man no less than it attracts those abnormal, half-diseased creatures we call ‘artists.’ She was like some nasty sweet flower growing out of a grave. I suppose you haven’t noticed, Martha, but artists have a curious distaste for healthy women. Not only literary men, but the great painters, too, seem to have an objection to really beautiful women. As a rule, the greater the painter the homelier his women. It is very seldom you find a great painter painting a really pretty woman. They seem to resent having to allow nature any share in the beauty of their art.

“Still, I don’t deny that in her way this little girl was pretty; and she was very clever and ambitious, too, and could talk Francis’s artistic jargon to perfection, picking it up from him so cleverly as they went along, that poor Francis never suspected that she was little more than a skilful feminine phonograph. It didn’t take long to persuade him once more that here at last was the One Woman he had been waiting for. Francis still makes periodical discoveries of that One Woman—but I know him better now, and pay no attention to them. I understand, as you would say, that they are a part of the horrible processes of poetry. But then the type was new to me. Having been brought up among soldiers, I was naturally a little out of it with poets. Besides, I wasn’t married then—and marriage makes a great difference, Martha; for marriage is one of those actions that speak louder than

words. If a man has had the courage to marry us, we can afford to reward him with a little of his own way afterward. Having paid us the compliment of so serious a fact, surely we may be a little lenient to his fancies. Francis, too, I am bound to say, was quite clever for once. As a rule, he is a miserable liar—the feeblest I know. But I'll confess that in this case, for a long while, he took me in completely.

"So soon as, by an accident, I discovered that I was not quite the only woman in the world, he promptly introduced me to the other, explaining, with the most convincing innocence of expression, that it was purely an artistic affinity, the sympathetic relationship of two fellow-craftsmen, nothing more. 'Do you never kiss her?' I asked. The very thought seemed to fill him with horror. 'Never!' he exclaimed; 'how can you ask me such a question? It is as unworthy of yourself, as it is unfair to her!' And think, Martha, I believed him—believed it was merely a union of souls. That, of course, I didn't mind. And by the way, Martha, have you noticed that so long as a woman lacks physical attraction—or so long as we think she does—our minds are at ease. But alas! you can never be sure what constitutes physical attraction with a poet. Only, of one thing be sure—that whenever he speaks of the soul he means, well—the body. Well, as I say, Francis took me in completely, and this pretty 'friendship' went on right under my nose, without my having a suspicion of its real nature—till the day came when our engagement was formally announced to our friends . . ."

Ruth paused, her black eyes flashing once more with ancient memories.

"And then? . . ." prompted Martha, interested as only another married woman could be in such a story.

"Well, an evening or two after our engagement had been announced, who should come to pay me a visit but our little inspiration girl, whom in the innocence of my heart I had grown to

look on quite as a friend. It was part of Francis's wicked scheme to disarm criticism by bringing us together occasionally, and she would sometimes come and take tea with me, and talk in a winning, pathetic way she had, which would have taken in the devil himself. So her visit was no particular surprise. Indeed, poor soul, my first thought was that she had come to congratulate me on my engagement. So successfully had they fooled me . . ."

"The wretches!" ejaculated Martha, sympathetically.

"It is sweet of you to come like this, Stella," I said, in my innocence. She flushed slightly with a momentary embarrassment, but quickly recovered her self-possession—of which, as a rule, I may say, the expression 'triple brass' gives but a faint idea. 'Child!' she said—she had an amusingly superior way of calling every one 'child'—men and women alike—particularly men—'child!'—and she took both my hands, and looked one of her particularly sincere, soul-melting looks deep into my eyes—'child! I would give anything not to have to say what I have come to say to-night—anything to save you the pain of it. If it were only for myself, I would never say it—but, by my love for my mother, which, as you know, is the most sacred thing in my life, I swear that I do it more for his sake than my own . . .'

"For his sake!" said I. 'What do you mean? Pray sit down, and explain yourself.'

"I mean," she said, 'that you must never marry Francis Darley . . .'

"Indeed," said I, 'and would you mind explaining why not? . . .'

"Because he doesn't really love you. He makes you believe so. But he doesn't really love you—as you deserve to be loved . . ."

"She had the impudence to say that!" cried the sympathetic Martha.

"Go on," I said," continued Ruth.

"Well," she explained, 'he really loves me—but he hasn't the strength to tell you so himself . . .'

"I was so dumfounded, not so

much by what she was saying as by the calm effrontery of her saying it, that I sat silent, just nodding to her to proceed.

"You see, child, you and he have been engaged a long time, and he feels in honor bound to you. And, of course, he loves you, too, in a way . . ."

"Thank you . . ." said I.

"Oh, don't be angry with me, Ruth. Am I hurting you?"

"Not in the least," said I; "I am interested—that's all. Please go on."

"Well, as I said, he is truly fond of you—but, well! there is—you must forgive me, Ruth, so much in him you don't understand, don't answer to . . ."

"It's true I can't rave over Pater," I said, "but go on . . ."

"Pater is perhaps a deeper bond than you imagine, Ruth," she went on, with unruffled calmness; "but, of course, what I mean is more and deeper than that. In short, I know that I am the woman who, more than any woman he has ever known, meets him at every point of his nature . . ."

"Do you know how many women he has loved?" I asked.

"Oh, yes! he has spoken all out honestly to me. I understand his nature. They were but part of his development . . ."

"Poor things!" interrupted Martha.

"Leading up to you?" I added, with womanly sarcasm.

"I know it sounds conceited, Ruth—and, oh, child, *don't* suffer—but I believe what you say is true. I do truly believe that ours is the true unity of the spirit. That sounds like cant, I know, but I cannot help it—for of this I am as sure as of my life itself that I have never known any one who is so myself, who so embodies all that I really care for in this world. There is no need for him to assure me that we care for each other—because we are so like. He knows that and I know it, and a hundred times we say it to each other! "No one ever said that to me but you. I never dreamed any one felt this but I." That absolute quality that I have always supposed means

love is the love we both have—and nothing can take that away from me . . ."

"She stopped, and looked at me, expecting me to speak. At last, I did.

"If Francis has made you believe all this, he is a better liar than I thought," I said, "and I am not proud of the part he has played."

"You mean," said she, entirely unshaken in her confidence, "that he has been lying to me. It is impossible . . ."

"Not, perhaps, deliberately," I said; "Francis would regard such deliberate lying as vulgar. Besides, there would be no amusement in it for him. No! he has undoubtedly meant what he said, when he said it. If he has deceived you, he has deceived himself as well. If you know him, as you say you do, you must know what a creature of moods he is, how he is carried away by the moment, and the last new influence, and acts, or rather *talks*, accordingly . . ."

"But this had no effect whatever. She listened to me tolerantly, with a look of anguished pity, which is her own patent. "Indeed, I wish for your sake, child, that you were right. I know his moods, of course, and for a long while discounted what he said to me on account of them . . . but, see, I hate to do it," and she turned to a small hand-bag she had brought with her. "I have here some of his letters. Here is one of them. Will you read this? . . ."

"She had the vulgarity to bring you his letters! . . ." exclaimed the simple Martha, who likewise does not read Pater.

"She had—and the fiendish cruelty, too."

"Never mind the cruelty—that was perhaps, after all, only the woman fighting for her life—but the vulgarity, Ruth—think of the vulgarity!"

"I'm afraid I forgot that at the moment. My heart was beating too cruelly from fear of what I was about to read . . ."

"And? . . ." prompted Martha.

"Well, Francis had been a devil, and

no mistake. If I hadn't loved him as I did——"

"But what was in the letter?" queried practical Martha.

"Just everything . . . No wonder the poor girl felt confident of his love. She could hardly have felt anything else. 'Give me another,' I said; and she handed me another from an enormous bundle tied up with a corset lace.

"Heavens!" I exclaimed, as I noted the size of the bundle. 'How often did he write to you?'

"Once every day," she answered, 'and sometimes twice, even three times.'

"Another?" I asked, and again, 'another?' till I had read about twenty. She handed them to me in a dead silence. I felt as though she were strangling me, and all the time I read she watched me with her cold, moon-lit eyes. At last, I could bear no more of them.

"Enough . . ." I said, and we both sat still, as it seemed for a long while. I confess that the letters had staggered me. Was she right, after all? I asked myself. Did he really love her best, and was he only marrying me, as she said, to keep his word? I took up the last letter, and read it again. It sounded terribly real, a simple *cri de cœur*, you would have said, if ever anything was written from the heart—which, by the way, Martha, living with a poet has long caused me to doubt. It was cruel reading, and it so shook my faith in Francis's love for me that I found myself clutching at a thought that began to form in my mind. Suppose it were true that Francis did in his way love us both—equally, I forced myself to say. Suppose the scales were about even, and he hardly knew which of us to choose? Wasn't Stella in this very act of showing me these letters unconsciously throwing something into my side of the scales which would outweigh her in Francis's mind once and forever? For Francis, wayward as he is and wicked as undoubtedly he had been, has a sound, kind heart, which

nothing can alienate like deliberate cruelty, particularly when it is mean and small . . ."

"And vulgar . . ." Martha once more interposed.

"The more the thought grew, the more comfort it gave me. 'Perhaps, after all,' I said to myself, 'she has unconsciously done me a great service. For, unless I am entirely out of it in my reading of Francis, he cannot possibly go on caring for any one capable of this action of Stella's. It flashes too fierce a light into the mean recesses of his nature. If I am not very wrong, he will welcome this self-revelation of hers as a deliverance from an unsuspected evil—for I know that he has thought of her as the gentlest and most delicate-natured of women. Over and over again, he has spoken of her tenderness, her exquisite refinement . . . but now . . ."

"Well?" said Stella, interrupting these reflections, which I imagine had been clearing my face of some of its first perplexity. At all events, they had helped to calm me, and when I answered I felt that I had regained command of myself.

"I think," I said, 'that Francis has behaved most unworthily toward both of us, and in a way most unworthy of himself. After reading these letters, I cannot blame you for thinking as you say, and, if my faith in his love for me relied upon letters, I confess that these letters to you would have shattered it; but . . .'

"You still then believe in his love for you?"

"Strange as it may seem, I do."

"Suppose I were to tell you . . ."

"Tell me anything—tell me all."

"And did she?" interrupted Martha once more.

"She did, indeed. It didn't make so much difference as she expected—didn't hurt me half so much as those letters; and, besides, it added greater strength to that growing feeling of security. What would Francis think of a woman who could so shamelessly reveal herself—for the poor end of vanquishing a rival? . . ."

"But what did you say?" prompted Martha.

"I said nothing for so long that she began to believe I was crushed, began to grow sorry for me . . . 'Dear,' she said . . ."

"The vixen!" murmured Martha.

"Dear, you must be brave. You will be brave, I know. Yes, be very brave. In the end it will all have helped you, I know it will, and, oh, child, let me try and help you—depend upon me to do all I can. Believe that no one in the wide world would give more to see you happy than I . . . It is not for myself I have spoken. It is for him. He has been so unhappy all his life, always seeking and never finding, and now that at last . . . Well, you can guess the rest, Martha."

"And, again, what did you say?"

"Nothing. I just smiled at her, and let her go on—till at last she grew a little uneasy at my tranquilized expression, and stopped suddenly.

"Why do you smile?" she asked. 'Are you still sure of his love?'

"Yes!" I answered.

"Will nothing convince you?" -

"Nothing but his actions."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean this," I said, speaking deliberately, "that I shall see Francis to-night, and tell him all you have told me. Perhaps you will lend me one of his letters?"

"With pleasure," she answered.

"I will tell him all you have told me—and then I will go away for six months . . ."

"And?" she queried.

"Leave the field open to you."

"And what do you expect from that?" she retorted.

"I expect nothing. I shall just wait and see what happens. That is all. If you are right, and he really loves you best . . . he will have the opportunity of proving it. I shall exert no influence upon him whatsoever. I will not write to him, nor will I allow him to write to me. If six months is too short a time for the test, take a year. If I loved him less,

I would say good-bye to him this moment. But I am a woman. I love him—and if he truly loves me . . . well, I will forgive him everything. I doubt if you could say the same. Reading Pater together is one thing, love is another. We shall see which he values more . . ."

"Well, what happened next?" prompted Martha once more.

"I saw Francis that evening, and next day I packed myself off to Spain."

"And Francis?"

"He has never seen nor written to her since. He took her action just as I had thought he would, and, indeed, felt his pride wounded because he had allowed himself to be infatuated by so essentially common a nature."

"And at the end of the six months?" said Martha.

"We were married."

"H'm!" said Martha, meditatively. "She had played her trump card—and lost."

"And what had Francis to say for himself?" asked Martha, presently. "His part in the drama does not strike me as particularly pretty—however easily a too indulgent wife may overlook it . . ."

"His explanation was the most naïve thing you ever heard," answered Ruth. "'When a man is in love with two women at once,' he said, 'what can he do but lie to each of them—about the other?'

"You were in love, then?" I said.

"Yes! in a way—in a way I have been a score of times, and shall probably be again . . ."

"When one is so often in love," I retorted, "don't you think one should find some other description for one's feeling?"

"Yes! but the feeling deserves a nice name," he answered. "It is not to be confused with . . ."

"Francis!" I said, "I want no more of your talk about a union of souls. A kiss is a kiss—whatever the motive. You remember that Paolo and Francesca were *reading* together—that day

they read no more. Probably they would have explained the situation to Lanciotto—as a common interest in Pater! . . .

“‘Ruth,’ he said, taking me in his arms, ‘you are far too clever. There is no need for you to read Pater.’

“‘I am a woman who loves you,’ I said. ‘And love is a clever god. He is so clever that he has taught me to understand even you—taught me to understand that you do really love me best in spite of—the little kisses.’

“‘Never mind those,’ he said, ‘they only teach me to value yours the more. Shall I say a poem I made for you the other day?’

“‘You fraud,’ I laughed, ‘say it, of course, so long as you don’t expect me to believe it.’ And this is the poem! I have it by heart,” said Ruth:

“‘Through the many to the one—
Oh, so many!
Kissing all and missing none,
Loving any.
Would you know how sweet is love
Monogamic?
Try a year or two of love
Polygamic!

“‘Would you know how dear is one,
Leave the others;
Loving all is loving none,
True love smothers—
Smothers all his heavenly flame,
Kissing any—
Loving much is not the same
As loving many.’”

“‘Yes! he certainly is a fraud,” was Martha’s comment.

“‘You know nothing at all about him,” retorted Ruth.

“‘What happened to the girl?” asked Martha. “‘I confess I grow a little sorry for her.’”

“‘You needn’t be,” said Ruth. “‘After all, Francis knows women. He could not have acted as he did, had he not known that it was out of his power to cause her any hurt. ‘Her little egoism makes her fire-proof,’ he used to say. ‘The egoism of the great is sensitive to the tiniest sting, but the egoism of the little is invulnerable. She will go on believing to the end of her life that I have never loved any woman but her; and that is all she

cares about—for her love was just vanity. Do you think I failed to see that?’

“‘I’m not sure I like that, Francis,’ I said. ‘Can’t you do something to disillusion her?’

“‘I’m afraid I can do nothing, except what I am doing—and going to do forever . . .’

“‘What’s that?’ said I.

“‘Love you,’ he answered—and, next morning, when by chance I had slept rather late, I found this little verse, twisted like a curl-paper in my hair. He called it ‘The Ghost’:

“‘Please, sweetheart, let her thin ghost rest—
The devil take that tiresome Past!
I loved you first, I loved you last,
And always have I loved you best.’”

“‘A poem seems to make up for a good deal,” said Martha.

“‘It does,” answered Ruth, “if you love the poet.”

Martha stayed for dinner, and the moon rose, and when ten o’clock came, she kissed Ruth with a certain curious respect, and went home. Martha was a very shrewd specialist of her sex. At first, and for a long while, she had suspected that Ruth was bravely making the best of it, as so many wives have to do; but the longer she talked with her the more she became convinced that Ruth was really a happy woman. She herself could not understand happiness on such conditions; but then—there are so many ways of being happy.

If she had seen Francis Darley’s return home a few moments after her departure, she would have been still further corroborated in her reading of—to her—an uncommon situation.

There was not the smallest shadow of a question on Ruth’s face as she welcomed her husband in from the moonlight.

“‘How you smell of the country!’” she said, “‘the pines, and the broad commons. Did you have a good time, little boy?’”

“‘Ruth,” he said, “do you know how I love you?’”

"Of course, I do," she answered, "otherwise do you think I would let you run off with pretty, young actresses like that?"

"I'm so glad you used the plural," said Francis, laughing.

"Of course," she said, "my safety is in numbers."

"I want to say a little poem I made as I came along," said Francis, presently. "You'll never guess who it is written to?"

"To me, of course," she said.

"Dear wife, there is no verse in all my songs

But unto thee belongs,"

quoted Francis, laughingly. "But you're right—it is for you . . ."

"Go on," she said.

"Little mother," he said, seating himself at her knees by the fire, and looking up into her face, "I am so glad to be back home. Do you believe I love you?"

"Of course, I do!" she answered.

"You are only a little child, and you cannot live without your mother . . . But say your poem, like a good child." And Francis recited as follows:

"I did not know I loved you, love, like this:
I thought our love was chance and passing need;

Your eyes were very brown, and, oh, your kiss
Was sweet indeed—
Yet dreamed I not of loving you like this.

"You stole so unannounced into my life,
No fatal premonitions or alarms
Told me that you—well! that you were my wife;

There were your arms—
And unannounced I stole into your life.

"Had some one asked me of you, I had said:

'It is too late to meet her—long ago
She is a dream, or maybe she is dead;

I do not know

More to tell any of her,' I had said.

"And now, beloved, too well you know the rest—

One woman must be heaven, and earth,
and hell;

So soft, yet so responsible, a breast!

I said 'Too well'—

Love, is my head too heavy for your breast?"

"You made that in your head as you came along?" said Ruth, when he had finished.

"No, in my heart."

"But she inspired it?"

"What if she did? You cannot surely object to an Inspiration Girl who inspires me with poems—to my wife?"

"Did you say it to her?"

"What do you think?"

"I believe you did."

"Believe me, I did not—but even suppose I had—I will admit that I am capable of reciting a new poem to a hack-driver, or a car-conductor, to any one who happens to be present—even suppose that I had recited it to her: what does that matter, so long as it was written to you?"

"But she might think you meant it for her?"

"What if she did?"

"You are right," said Ruth, "what does it matter? . . . so long," she added, "as you are quite sure it was written for me . . ."

And Francis was quite sure.



LOOKED THE PART

"THERE goes Mrs. Gander-Beach. They say she fights continually with her husband."

"Well, she has a happy, contented look, as if she thoroughly enjoyed herself."

“O PERFUMED NIGHT, AND LOVE, AND THOU!”

By Montagu Lessing

O PERFUMED night, and love, and thou!
The memory is with me yet
Of mingled rose and mignonette
And jasmine blown from trembling bough.

A moonlit, sighing, southern night—
The fireflies slowly floating there
Like mirrors of the stars, as fair,
As tremulous with life's delight.

The cheep of insects' serenade,
The Pan-pipe of the Summer love,
From dew-kissed earth to heaven above
A pagan love-chant, unafraid.

O perfumed night, and love, and thou!
Soft Summer airs that bent to sigh
And list the passion-phrase that I
Then whispered—and remember now!

And thou!—oh, thou the symbol rare
Of all that nameless, throbbing charm,
And I, who held thee in my arm,
Held all of heaven, and havened there.

The incense of thy hair that night
Still lingers in my thought of thee,
The spikenard of memory.
And subtle as an angel's flight.

And, oh, the sheen within thine eyes,
Twin pools of fairy lustrousness
That darkened with thy love's distress,
Or shone to flame in love's surprise.

But more the tender spell of this
That knows no name, the sorcery
That won the very heart of me—
The thrilling magic of thy kiss.

Therein new heaven and heavenly earth
Unrolled to me their glory's page;
The joy of fool, the peace of sage,
Were taught me by thy lips' soft worth.

God, Love, and Life—the three in one—
 Were shown me there, and all the bliss
 Of being trembled in thy kiss—
 No farther truth, and other none.

What matter whither thou art gone,
 Or who thou wert, or other thing?
 No more than of the birds that sing
 To-morrow's moment of the dawn.

Thou wert the symbol of it all,
 The splendid sign, the sacrament
 Of that the Summer night held blent,
 Within my waiting heart to fall.

O perfumed night, and love, and thou!
 The memory is with me yet
 Of mingled rose and mignonette
 And jasmine blown from trembling bough.



FABLE OF THE LOVE-SICK KING

AND there was a certain great King who lay dying of grief, for her he loved was gone from him forever. All day long he lay on his couch of rose-leaves, and courtiers washed away the tears, and poured them from golden vases on the grave of the one he loved.

And the flocks died, and the peasants starved, for it was decreed that none should do else but weep for the dead. And, the nation being near unto ruin, the wise ones held counsel, but no relief could they find for their desperate need; till at length spoke an humble shepherd, saying:

"In the valley where my sheep wander and eat the sweet young grass and the tender herbs, a certain great Physician dwells. I pray he be brought that he cure the King."

Now, though hope was small, couriers traveled swiftly the wild mountains, where the brooks sing always and are clear as a maiden's eye, and the rocks pierce the earth like battlements of giant castles hidden below, till at length they came to the Physician, and, when he had heard their tale, he washed his hands and went straightway with them.

And, when the Physician had arrived at the court of the King, the people fell on their knees, and begged him to save them from destruction.

Then the Physician said: "Oh, King, put by thy grief."

And the King said: "It may not be, for the one I love is dead."

"Put by thy grief," the Physician said, "and thou shalt see the one thou lovest."

And the King sprang up, and the Physician commanded a certain great mirror to be brought, and ordered the King to look therein.

And the King gazed, and behold! it was himself he saw.

ERWIN HAYDEN.

THE STORY OF OLD MOTHER HUBBARD

By William C. de Mille

As told in *The Strand Magazine*:

THE MYSTERIOUS CUPBOARD

THE talk had turned that evening on metaphysics, and stories had been told which sent the company shivering to bed. At last no one was left sitting before the huge ancestral fireplace of Twillum Manor except Lord Twillum, our host, and myself.

"Speaking of mysterious disappearances," said he, "did I ever tell you of the strange adventure my grandmother had, in this very room?"

I had been too often the guest of this peculiar man, with the prematurely gray hair, to interrupt him, so I said nothing, but prepared myself to hear a tale which, as it turned out, was to have a climax that to this day has never been satisfactorily explained.

"It was," continued his lordship, "in the Winter of 184—: the Winter of the great frost. My grandmother, who was then Lady Twillum, was a widow when she married my grandfather, and was known to the peasantry as 'Old Mother Hubbard'—Hubbard being the name of her first husband.

"She was very fond of pets, and her special pride was a small fox-terrier known as Spud.

"One evening, when the wind was howling around the andirons, very much as it is now, she suddenly remembered that Spud had had no dinner; and, at the same time, thought of a bone which she had previously laid aside for him. Saying nothing to her husband, who was dozing in his chair, she softly opened the closet door.

What she saw has never been ascertained. My grandfather was awakened by a heavy fall, and before he could reach her—she was dead."

Lord Twillum paused, and poured himself out a stiff brandy-and-soda.

"And the bone?" I asked, breathlessly.

"It was never found," he replied. "Some think it was not quite dead, and, the cold night reviving it, it was able to escape when the door was opened. But none of my family has since put a bone in that closet."

As he finished speaking, a draught of air blew the closet door wide open. With a muttered gasp, Lord Twillum gazed wildly into the deep recess, and then tottered. As I caught him in my arms he just had strength to murmur, "The bone—do you see? It is—still—gone!"

When the doctor arrived, Lord Twillum had ceased to breathe.

In *Harper's Magazine*:

THE MISCALCULATION OF MOTHER HUBBARD

Down the long lane, between the weeping willows, where the nightingale alternated with the scarlet tanager in singing hymns of praise to the ever-present landscape, Old Mother Hubbard, the village seamstress, was slowly toiling.

"Only a little longer, Laddie," she remarked to the small dog which, trotting cheerfully beside his mistress, brought into still stronger prominence the tired look in her withered, but kindly, face.

"Ah, Laddie," she continued, brave-

ly choking back a sob, "if anything were to happen to you, what should I have to live for? You're all that's left now—you and the house."

At last, they came to the end of their journey, and the dog brightened perceptibly as Mother Hubbard opened a small, well-known door, from behind which she was accustomed to produce whatever food for her pet she had been able to buy with her pitifully meager earnings.

She opened the door, and looked for the bone, which only that morning had been reposing peacefully in its brown-paper wrappings. Not finding it, she searched again, and yet again; but in vain. At last, her worst fears were realized—the bone was gone.

With a quiet groan, the poor old woman sank to the floor.

"It's gone, Laddie—gone away to a brighter land, where you and I must soon follow. It was all I had, Laddie, and now we must starve——"

The poor little beast looked up into her face with dumb appeal. Not finding there what he sought, his pitifully small tail drooped between his meager legs, and he, too, sank to the floor, feebly trying to lick her hand.

When they found them, three days later, it seemed as if they had just dropped off to sleep.

In *The Smart Set*:

A MNEMONICAL ERROR

"Dogs," said I, "are queer creatures."

"Not so queer as men," said Molly Hubbard.

There was nothing to be said; so I said it.

"Why?" she finally remarked.

"Because," said I, thoughtfully disengaging my trousers from Fido's teeth.

"That's a woman's reason," said Molly, with an encouraging glance at Fido.

"It's a woman's dog," said I. It was one on her, and she knew it.

"Speaking of cupboards——" she began, pertly.

"You're trying to change the subject," I interrupted.

"A woman's privilege," she replied, crossing to the cupboard.

A pause ensued, during which she opened the closet door.

"It's gone!" said she, staring tearfully.

"The privilege?" I half joked.

"Don't be horrid," she pouted; "I mean the bone."

"What bone?" said I, thinking wildly.

"Our bone of contention," she sobbed, falling into my arms.

After all, I like dogs.



TWILIGHT

LIGHT still lingers in the sky—
Is it night or day?
Neither yonder phantom moon
Nor her star can say.

Earth knows well; for now go by
Fluttering and all agleam,
Flocks of the loves, with shoulders winged,
On the ways of dream.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

A BYSTANDER

By Bliss Carman

WHAT mortal ever
Laid hold upon life
So lightly as I?

I behold the wind
In the purple grass
By the river marge.

I hear the swallows
Twitter at dawn
Under my eaves.


The fragrance of orchards
Burdens the air
In early Spring.

I swim in the azure
Of cool sea-baths
Where the bathers plunge.

To be the beholder
Of all these things
Is enough for me;

So shy and furtive
A stranger in life
Is this soul of mine.

The forest shadows,
The flight of a bird,
The fall of a leaf;

 The murmur of bees
Through flowery meadows
On Summer noons;

The voyaging rain-clouds,
The wheeling sun,
And the swinging tide;

The mists that traverse
The mountain slopes
Ghostly and gray;

THE SMART SET

All things are moving,
Tending somewhere
With fleeting time.

Destiny, choosing,
Tarries between
A kiss and a sigh.

Everywhere Beauty,
Passing unseen
Through change after change,

Like an ageless spirit,
Opens the doors
Of the House of Life.

Who would not follow?
Shall not I go,
Ready and glad,

With all things mortal?
But, ah, for the old
Wild sorrow of love!



THE ETERNAL PROCESSION

PARKE—I must get home early to-night.
LANE—What's going on?
"Our cook."



A CHIPPER CONVERSATION

FIRST SPARROW—You remember that nice meal of rice we had on this
doorstep about a year ago?
SECOND SPARROW—Yes, indeed. This isn't half so good, is it?
"No; what is it, anyway?"
"Peptogenic milk-powder."



CLARA—I believe my complexion grows better every day.
MAUD—Really?
"No. Unreally."

THE ROSE OF A DEAR DESIRE

By Emery Pottle

LITTLE Billy stole into the garden as unobtrusively as an angel visitor.

It was not yet half-after eight in the morning. And such a morning! Once, when you were very small, perhaps your mother opened her jewel-case, and poured out into the cup of your little upturned palms a bewilderingly beautiful stream of diamonds and pearls and turquoises and emeralds and other precious things whose names you did not know. Well, then, the morning was like that—a stream of glittering gems flung out over the earth. The rain of the night had vanished, save for the last light shimmer of silver on the grass and under the rose-bushes. All its moisture seemed to have changed, fairy-like, into a dripping fragrance of earth and trees and flowers. A fresh westerly wind moved delicately through the foliage that was almost heavy with olive-green and gold sunlight.

There was, too, an expectant quality to the morning. The very beauty and grace of the world were preparing the way for something splendidly alive and debonair, and making straight its paths. Over on the great, gracious mountains across the valley, there were assuredly, in glades liquid with sunshine and shadow, the wood-creatures at play—nymphs, hamadryads, fauns, satyrs, the god Pan himself.

But here in the garden no superstitions of heathen divinities were tolerated—for it was the bishop's garden, you must know. So the morn in the valley waited for Christine, the bishop's well-beloved niece, confident that when she came the sum of all its glory would be told.

Indeed, it was a morning for a maid. The honeyed trickle of song from the throat of the birds said it; the drone of the bee at the day-lilies said it; the odors of the blossoms breathed it subtly.

I shall not describe to you the garden. If there is a flower you know and love, if there is in your mind and heart a prospect of cool-shadowing trees and green lawns set with medallions of flower-beds, if there is a tiny fountain, a grotto of moss-grown rocks with a bubble of a rill, a curtain of coquettishly prim hollyhocks painted against a lofty hedge of larches—all these you could have found in the bishop's garden—if you had known Christine.

Little Billy felt the glamour of the hour as he entered paradise. He proceeded on tiptoe, craftily, as he had been bidden to do. Billy's motions were under his control, however, for he had a horror of anything "sissy"—the term is his. As he dodged lightly down a long path, set on either side with luxuriant bushes of old-fashioned pink roses, he lifted his handsome young nose, and sniffed the early coolness, softly muttering, "Gee, it smells great."

Half-way down the garden, his path merged into another one; at their joining grew the Jacqueminot bush. When he reached it, little Billy glanced hastily about him with the subtle eye of secrecy. He beheld no one. In an instant, he had snatched his blue cap from his head, extracted the merest little white square of a note from its lining, and had thrust it in the heart of the largest red rose on the bush. After that, he fled like a vagrant wind

out of the garden, across the lawns and down the elm-shaded street.

Presently, Mrs. Middy, the housekeeper, and Sarah appeared with a tiny table which they set importantly for the bishop's and Christine's breakfast under the silver maples.

At nine o'clock came the bishop himself, tall and delicately slender, a little bent with years and ecclesiastic ministrings.

"Good morning, Mrs. Middy. Breakfast not yet prepared? Dear me, dear me!" he remonstrated, absently; "dear *me*!"

"Good morning, your grace," replied she. "Not quite ready, not quite—but in a minute's time the strawberries will be on the table, your grace."

"Mrs. Middy—I—I must protest against your using that—er—formally erroneous term, 'your grace.' How often have I"—the bishop paused to cough admonishingly, and to banish the slightest suggestion of gratification from his face—"have I cautioned you against its use. In the future—but I will walk a few moments in the rose-garden until breakfast is ready."

"Yes, your—yes, sir," said Mrs. Middy, suavely.

The bishop's legs had lost their early vigor as well as their early contour; he no longer mildly regretted that he could never bring his flock to countenance gaiters and knickerbockers on their shepherd. Of late, his walk had become a somewhat guarded amble. He paused before the Jacqueminot bush, and contemplated it with gently swelling memories and emotions; for his heart, since Christine had come to live with him, had grown strangely sentimental. The velvet-petaled flowers, almost royal purple in shadow, recalled young days and young love. His thin, placid lips curved into a smile as vague phrases of some poem of "the honey of romance" wandered through his mind. At that moment, he espied an edge of white protruding from an especially fine rose.

"That is a curious thing," he considered, adjusting his dangling eyeglasses; "extraordinary!" With a keener vision he bent over the rose, and extracted a tiny folded paper from its heart.

"Why, bless my soul! Why, why—what is this? A note—upon my word, indeed! Why—" The bishop hesitated, with the bit of paper in his hand. He raised it close to his eyes, and scanned its outside closely. In the fine, wrinkled lines of his mouth and eyes there crept a reminiscent tenderness; involuntarily, he straightened his unsteady shoulders, and pulled off his soft black hat. The sun on the glistening silver of his hair and his slightly flushed face retouched a handsome old portrait.

"After all these years," he smiled, "to find a note again in the red rose-bush! I'm getting young in heart. But there is no name on it. Really, I'm dreaming"—he whimsically pinched his hands—"no—it's some boy-and-girl nonsense—no, Christine is too young. I shall open it. I certainly shall." With fingers just then too tremulous to be deft, the bishop unfolded the paper, and read hastily. A moisture gathered before his eyes; he read again, slowly, and again.

"Strange," he pondered. "That verse, her initials! Dear me, dear me! How very pleasant—but who put it here?" The bishop chuckled, and repeated the words of the note in a whisper:

"Oh, the morn is a rose, my Heart,
The scent of thy soul's attire—
And thou art my morn, my Heart,
The rose of my dear desire.

"A. F."

"After many days—come back to me—the verse—a very nice little verse, too. I wrote it to Alicia—let me see—yes, yes—forty-five years ago this Summer. Dear *me*! And the last morning she ever put a note for me in the rose-tree, just these lines were in it. How long ago it seems, and how long ago it is—dear Alicia."

The bishop stood still philandering

in the morning sunlight—a smile on his face and a smile at his heart.

“Your grace!”

He started, and with something very like a blush, thrust the note into his waistcoat pocket.

“Yes, Mrs. Middy—coming—directly.” The bishop gently plucked a red rose, and fastened it in his button-hole before he returned to his breakfast.

“Is Christine not yet down?” he inquired of Mrs. Middy. In his absorption, he put the loaf-sugar on his strawberries; the housekeeper coughed nervously. “Your—sir, the soft sugar—er—”

“Yes, yes—quite so—exactly. And Christine is——?”

At that very moment, a blossom of a young girl ran lightly up to the bishop’s chair, and, flinging her lithe arms about his neck, kissed his cheeks three times, exuberantly; a fourth kiss she dropped neatly upon his white hair.

“Best of uncles! I am late—oh, very late,” she laughed. “And on a morning like this!”

It was Christine, of course.

She stood a moment with her hand in the bishop’s, and I can assure you that you have never seen a prettier creature than Christine. She was morning, she was roses. If I say that her gown was very soft and filmy and white, open at her round young throat, and displaying firm brown arms; that her hair was wondrously waved, and brown, with gold in its high lights; that she was slender and straight as the silver maples; if I say that her eyes were forest streams in softly filtering sunshine; that her lips were adorably red, like Jacqueminots; that her nose was the most delightful nose in the world—why, you will have but little idea of how beautiful Christine was, because you could not hear her speak, and see the red come into her cheek, and the splendid love of life manifest itself through her expression.

The bishop beamed on Christine with benignant, matutinal blessing.

“My dear child!” he said; and again, “my dear Christine! It is indeed a

charming morning. But Mrs. Middy is waiting—come to your breakfast.”

“I’m going for a rose, best of uncles—a red one—like yours”—the bishop reddened, too—“before I sit down.” And she danced down the rose-bordered garden path to the Jacqueminot bush.

Presently, Christine returned, slowly and quietly, for something had happened to change her mood; perhaps it was the passing shadow of a cloud; perhaps—but who knows the moods of young, enchanting nineteen!

“You did not get your rose,” observed her uncle, in mild surprise.

“No,” said she, briefly; then added, by way of explanation, “I didn’t see any I liked—I changed my mind. It is enough to see one on you, dearest.”

After that, the breakfast went languidly. Christine was very sober, and the bishop seemed much absorbed. Fragile little smiles kept creeping into his mouth and eyes. Christine let several moments pass, and then she spoke.

“Uncle, why do you smile in that ’twas-fifty-years-ago-this-June way? It’s very disturbing, because I don’t know the joke.”

“Eh?” he ejaculated, hastily, waving his napkin.

“The joke? What is it?”

“My dear, there is no joke, as you call it. It is a fine, rare morning—that is all.”

“It’s very hot.”

“Christine—hot? With this excellent breeze?”

“It’s a sultry, disagreeable wind,” contradicted Christine, crossly. “It’s a—a—sirocco, uncle!”

“My child!”

“Oh, it is—don’t contradict—and I have found two green strawberries.” Christine was petulant, I must confess.

The bishop stared at her in distressed wonder.

“Are you quite well, my dear? If you are feeling——”

“I’m not. I’m perfectly well. Please don’t fuss—there, now, dearest, I’ve hurt you. You made me. I’m a horrid little beast. I’ll never—”

Christine flung her arms again about the bishop's neck, and upset the cream jug.

"My dear—" he protested, weakly. She deserved a strong reproof.

"Now stop! It was sour cream, I know."

She sat down on the arm of the bishop's chair, and began to stroke his thin, white hair.

"Uncle? Were you—I'm not pulling your hair, at all—were you—ever—in love?"

"Christine, why—why——"

"Honestly, uncle, really, now—I'll never, never tell any one."

The bishop smiled ingenuously, as who would not with Christine stroking one's hair? He patted her hand. "A long time ago, little one, a long time ago."

"In Summer-time?"

"Yes." The bishop's eyes strayed to the roses.

"Were—were there roses?"

"The world was all roses, as I remember it," laughed he.

"And—and poetry?"

"Reams."

"Was she pretty?" continued Christine, ingratiatingly.

"Bless me, yes! Pretty? Ah, the prettiest thing— Oh, dear me, dear me, yes!"

"And did you love—?" returned she.

The bishop smiled and sighed.

"Then it wasn't always quite—quite——"

"No, little one, not always quite, quite happy. I—she——"

"She went away, perhaps—one day—er—cross—about something, dearest?" said Christine, softly.

"Yes, yes. I think so." The bishop looked very sober.

"And you wouldn't make up, bad one—and then——?"

"And then, Inquisitive, I lived an old bachelor ever afterward."

"But, best of uncles, didn't you ever see her again, or write her, or——?"

"Oh, not until long after, ages after, when I had grown very, very——"

"Not *old*, uncle," she protested.

"Well, then, very, very white-haired. Then, one morning—a most beautiful morning—like this—I heard from her once more."

"Uncle," whispered Christine, breathlessly, tears on her lashes, "what did she——?"

"Bless my soul, I'll not tell you what she said. I'm a sentimental old fellow in your wheedling hands. What should you know of love? Go away and leave me, dear. See, here is Mrs. Middy. Yes, Mrs. Middy?"

"A lady to see you, sir. It's important, she says. And she says she's an old friend, and mayn't she come out to the garden, sir?"

"One of my parishioners, Mrs. Middy?" inquired the bishop.

"No, sir. A strange lady, sir."

"Very well—take away the breakfast things, and then ask her to come out here. Little one, you won't——?"

"Bother, uncle! I will mind going, but—I'll go." And Christine departed to the depths of the garden, stopping to throw back over a shoulder, "I was just going to tell you a most interesting thing about—myself, but I won't—*now!*"

II

A VERY frail, a very delicately-fashioned, a very graciously-smiling old lady in lavender lawn and lace rustled pleasantly toward the bishop. He had risen to bow courteously, when she impulsively laid her hand in his, and looked straight into his eyes with an irresistible air of faded coquetry, amusement and affection, though she did not speak.

The bishop gazed at her long and deeply, yet without surprise. At last he spoke, with great gentleness.

"My dear Alicia! I—I was expecting you."

"My dear Chester," she answered, simply.

With repeated greetings, he led her to a seat, and she took it, still smiling, uncertainly.

"You got my note, then?" she said,

after a moment of rest, and looking at him.

The bishop eyed her with amusement. Alicia had always taken the initiative, he remembered.

"Oh, yes! It was good of you to send it in the old way."

If she was puzzled, she did not show it. "Ye-es, Chester. And what do you think of it?"

Again the bishop laughed. "Bless me, Alicia, you've not changed at all, have you?"

"My dear man, I'm an old woman with the rheumatism and a parrot and a son, and my doctor tells me that I'm to give up coffee, and drink some horrid kind of cereal—though I shall never do it. Not changed, Chester! I'm change personified—but what do you think of it, frankly?"

"It brought back dear memories, Alicia," said the bishop, softly. "It was forty-five years ago this Summer that——"

She smiled, tremulously. "As long ago as that? You were a very handsome young man then, Chester, and I was a very——"

"Beautiful girl, Alicia."

"Tut! I was about to say that I was a very silly little girl. And do you remember the letters we wrote, and——?"

"And the poems, and——?" continued the bishop, eagerly.

"And the red rose-bush—and——?"

"The morning notes we put in the heart of the largest rose?" laughed the bishop. "But you do remember. Your note this morning brought it all back to me, as if—as if—it were but yesterday, and I was a young sprig of a fellow dashing down to the garden to find my letter. What gay, careless things we were, to be sure."

Alicia's face was slightly flushed with pleasure, and her eyes sparkled.

"Upon my word, Chester, I shall be flirting with every eligible old man I meet after the excitement of this morning. But, to return, isn't it a charming idea?"

"The note?" said the bishop bewildered.

"Yes—I mean no. What I said in the note."

"Oh, dear me, yes, if you think so; but quite sentimental, Alicia, at our age—quite," chuckled he.

"My dear Chester—what is love but sentiment, and what has our age to do with it?"

The bishop blushed, and stammered, "I—why—nothing, I suppose."

"Certainly not. If we are agreed over it, isn't that enough? I was married when I was——"

The bishop replied, hastily: "Yes, I remember. And seventeen years later that very Summer I was made a bishop." He was becoming very perplexed, and the broad, placid forehead wrinkled nervously.

Alicia regarded him in growing surprise.

"Of course, if you don't want to renew relations long since——" she continued, a little stiffly.

"Oh, Alicia, you misinterpret me! I—I—isn't it a little strange for two old people to attempt—to assume—to—to——?" the bishop faintly protested. He was being rapidly swept from his moorings. "My cloth, you know, and—and my flock, what would they think? Why——"

"Good heavens, Chester! What on earth can your flock object to? A more delightful match I can't imagine!"

The bishop rallied gallantly, and began to parry.

"My dear Alicia, you compliment me. It is a—er—it was once my dream, a very dear dream. I have never quite lost it. One doesn't forget so easily, Alicia. Our Summer long ago was a beautiful one—as you were beautiful." He smiled boyishly. "I called you the morn and the rose of my dear desire, didn't I?"

Alicia laid her hand on the bishop's for an instant. She did not speak, but her eyes shone, dimly.

"You did remember the verse," he said with confidence.

"More than that, I taught it to my son," she answered, half-shyly.

"Your son! And have you a son?"

Ah, yes, you said you had. And my dear sister Harriet's niece, Christine, is living with me now; she's been here a month. You must see her before you go." The bishop leaned forward, interestedly.

Alicia suddenly sat bolt upright in her chair, and looked at him with suspicion and concern.

"Chester," she gasped, "what in the world do you mean? What are you saying? What—have I a son? Why—why—" She sank back in her chair, overcome.

The bishop hastily offered her a glass of water.

"Is it the heat?" he asked, solicitously.

"Oh, my dear man, what—what—have I—have you—been saying?" she murmured, disregarding his anxiety. "*Did* you get my note asking for a little talk with you about Christine and my son, Anthony? *Did* you?"

A strange look of comprehension spread over the bishop's perturbed countenance—a look of understanding, embarrassment, questioning, regret.

"No, I did not receive it," he said, slowly.

"Then what—?" She did not finish her question.

"Pray do not distress yourself, Alicia," the bishop said, quietly. "I fear I have upset you by some silly stupidity on my part. But won't you explain about Christine and Anthony? You said, Anthony?"

"You knew, of course, that—" Alicia eyed him sharply, then broke off. "Why, hasn't Christine told you? The little wretch!—oh, my dear, they—they are in love—they want to marry. They—oh, Chester!—I thought you knew."

"But when—where! How—why, Christine is very young, Alicia—I—I—I'm very surprised—I—" The bishop's perplexity was rapidly unnerving him.

"That is just the point, Chester," began Alicia, with fluttering maternity. "They're both young—Anthony met her in the Winter—before she came to you—and, well, Chester, you know.

Now, it is the old story. Love, roses, Summer and all that. We got back only last night, Anthony and I. Fancy, it's forty years since I have been here, and fifteen since my husband died! And Anthony has confessed to me his love—he's a splendid boy of twenty-four, and very good to look at—and I've come to see you—to ask you what you think—to talk it all over with you. But there's been some dreadful mistake somewhere. I thought Christine would have told you; I—" Alicia stopped, breathless, and looked appealingly at the bishop, her thin, jeweled hands spread out before her in despair.

The bishop remained silent, folding her hands gently in his. There was a bit of a twinkle in his eyes when he addressed her. "Come with me, Alicia," he said; and he led her wonderingly down the rose path. Before the Jacqueminots they paused.

They were too experienced in years and labor and living, I suppose, for the fine wildings of youth to come again to them. But in the silent room of memory, where Time's forgiving hand had swept aside everything but the fragrances of an old love put away in lavender, there yet remained a great tenderness. Alicia looked long and gently at the red roses; the bishop looked thus at Alicia. With dim eyes she smiled at him, and laid her hand on his sleeve. Fumbling in his pocket, the bishop produced a tiny note, which he unfolded and held out to the handsome old woman at his side.

Alicia adjusted her lorgnette. As she read, two delightful spots of pink suffused her old cheeks.

"Oh, the morn is a rose," she murmured. "Hum—hum! 'Soul's attire, my heart'—'The rose of my dear desire.' Chester, you wrote very pretty verses—long ago. It was long ago, wasn't it? Dear me, how far we have gone!" She turned a whimsical face to him. "And when did this note come, Chester?"

He smiled reminiscently, and, plucking the largest rose, laid it in her hand. "This morning—I found it in this very

rose. I thought—I was foolish enough to think that——”

She took up his words very softly, her face close to the velvety petals. “That I sent it? Oh, Chester—it *was* on a morning like this! That old verse, too!”

Suddenly, she burst into a very sweet, tinkling laugh. The bishop caught her eye, humorously.

“Oh, how indelicate I must have seemed—to ask you—if—you—had—got—my note! After all these silent years, Chester, to pop in one fine morning and apparently sue for your hand! Oh, my dear man—to ask you point-blank—face to face—why, your flock—Oh, it’s too ridiculous! Why, you poor fellow!”

The bishop drew up his tall, stooping figure, and, throwing back his fine head, laughed as he had not laughed for years. The god Pan over on the mountains must have heard, for he sent back an enchanting echo. The sun gleamed, the roses swayed. Alicia blushed like a girl. I assure you, a more perfect picture of the romance of old love you never have seen.

Quite at the farthest end of the garden, by the day-lily bed, sat Christine, on the grass, well screened by the sun-flowers. She was not alone. Indeed, Christine was never alone. A tall, bronzed, sturdy fellow in white flannels stood anxiously beside her. From time to time, he pleaded with her earnestly, but she regarded him with coldness.

“You did not,” she asserted.

“But I did—by little Billy—the vagabond. I did, indeed, Christine. And he said he put it there. You know, mother told me of that little romance of hers—I never knew the chap’s name—but she gave me the verse he wrote, and—and—I wrote you what I was going to do, and you said yes, and, indeed, Christine, I sent the note, and——”

“You couldn’t have. It wasn’t there,” she reaffirmed. “I went at once, as soon as I came down, but it wasn’t there. You forgot. I shall never forgive you.”

“Christine, you’re awfully cruel. Of course, if you doubt——” Anthony was most inexperienced, you will observe.

Just then—oh, good fortune!—the bishop’s laugh rang out. Christine jumped to her feet in surprise. “Good heavens! Uncle! Anthony, come at once and let’s see what he is doing.” Apparently her resentment had fled, for she held out her hand with an adorable smile. I dare say she had by this time some idea of where the note had gone.

Together they strolled down the rose path. Anthony gasped in surprise, and whispered, excitedly, “It’s mother!” when he saw the others.

“It’s my uncle, the bishop,” returned Christine, demurely. “Now they’ve seen us. She’s told him. Oh, Anthony, I never, never, never can face him—oh, dear! Oh, he’ll never let us!”

Alicia turned to the bishop, and pointed her parasol toward the two culprits. “There—you see!” she said.

“Your son?” he asked, hastily, wiping his glasses.

“Yes—Anthony.”

“Christine,” called the bishop, “come here!”

She approached with her brown head bent in deep humility, though I admit that in her eyes there was a roguish glint. Anthony held her hand closely for security.

The bishop regarded her with silent amusement and reproach. Alicia came to the rescue. “Bishop Fallowfield,” she said, “this is my son, Anthony Frothingham, though how he got here, I can’t tell.” She turned to Christine. “Bad child, why didn’t you tell your uncle about us—about Anthony?”

“’Deed, uncle, I was going to when—when——” she hesitated for a most mischievous moment—“when you began to tell me your own love-story.”

The bishop was helpless; Alicia could not meet his distressed face. All four waited, Anthony mystified, Christine ecstatic. It was Anthony who spoke first.

"Mother—how did you—?" he began, with a puzzled face.

"My dear, the bishop is an old, a very old friend of mine. I came to see him."

Christine stooped to the ground, and snatched a piece of white paper that had fallen there. Anthony blushed tremendously as he saw it, and his hand involuntarily stretched out to take it, but the bishop forestalled him.

"It is my note, my boy," he said, "for I found it. There was no name on it. I claim it for—old time's sake." He bowed to Alicia with old-fashioned gallantry. "Give it to me, Christine."

There was a tremulously sweet smile on Christine's face as she surrendered it.

"It is yours, best of uncles," she

said, softly. "I give it to you with my blessing."

Alicia put her arm in the bishop's, and said, gaily, though her voice was quivering strangely, "Come, Chester, we must go into executive session over these silly young people. There is a serious affair and needs much discussion."

With another stately bow the bishop handed her grandly from the garden, and Christine and Anthony were left alone.

"You see," Anthony began, masculinely, "you see, I did send it, but——"

"I knew it all the time," she interrupted.

"But, by Jove, I never guessed that mother and the bishop were——"

"Silly! I knew that, too!" said Christine.



A COQUETTE

OFTEN when looking in her eyes,
 Deep blue and beautiful, they bring
 Visions of violets and skies
 And all the sweets of Spring.

Her throat and perfect mouth both seem
 For music made, and well she knows
 That when she speaks I straightway dream
 Of Summer and the rose.

Caught in her soft, luxuriant hair,
 Imprisoned riches I behold,
 And find, in fancy, mirrored there
 The Autumn with its gold.

Her heart—alas, for love and me!
 It seems a crime to call it so;
 Yet Truth compels the simile—
 Is Winter and the snow!

JULIAN DURAND.



CAST your bread upon the waters of Wall street, and after many days it will come back to you depreciated about nine-tenths in value.

GOLD

By Temple Bailey

THE sun was setting in a yellow glow. To Evelyn, it seemed a part of the haunting justice of things that to-night there should be no red tinge in the clouds; it was only shedders of blood who were stricken by the sight of a crimson sky, not girls who married for money.

She wondered whether she would always see gold in the sunset; whether she should forever hate the yellow roses that bordered the path of the garden. Had she, Midas-like, acquired by one act the evil power that touched all her world with a metallic gleam?

Darkness succeeded twilight, and the fireflies came out, the glittering, golden bees of the night. The moon rose and the stars—all gold. Evelyn shuddered as she went languidly toward the big, dark house. A tree-toad piped shrilly. From the marshes came the plaint of a whippoorwill.

Suddenly, the ill-omened noises of the night were lost in a ripple of laughter that announced the approach of three girls, who, with arms interlocked, came dancing up the path.

"Come with us," said Christine, the fair-haired, and Evelyn was drawn into the youthful chain, and together the four swayed down the walk, and across the dewy grass of a lawn to sink down at last on a rose-bowered porch, breathless, laughing, beautiful. Before she could protest, Evelyn found herself the centre of the adoring circle.

"So Neil has really come back!" cried the Three Graces. "Oh, lucky girl!"

It was a moment of importance.

Evelyn had felt set apart by the fact of her engagement, and now she sat expectant in the thrilling pause that followed her announcement of it.

In a rush they were upon her, and she was enclosed by arms in misty chiffons, she was kissed by lips that had not lost their virgin freshness, and she was pulled this way and that by tender hands.

They were tremulous with congratulation, and they showered upon her eager questions.

"He has come back rich?"

"Yes."

"And he loves you as much as ever?"

"Yes."

"And you are to be married at once?"

"With you three dear things as bridesmaids."

There was another little rush of delight, and soft murmurs, and, again, the questions.

"You really loved him all the time, and we didn't know?"

Silence.

"Of course, you loved him when he was poor?" anxiously.

"Of course," faintly.

"Or you would not marry him now. There never was anything mercenary about you, Evelyn. Now, some girls——"

"Of course, it is hard to be poor," protested Evelyn.

"But you would have married him if he hadn't a cent. You needn't finish, you dear thing. We know."

Silence.

"It's beautiful," murmured the voices, "beautiful, you dear."

So absorbed were they in their devotions at the shrine of this new-made goddess that they did not catch the crunch of footsteps on the gravel.

The man who came toward them was young and vigorous, but there was something about him that gave one the impression of age—a sternness, even a hardness, as of one who had fought battles. His eyes were on the girl who formed the centre of the group—Evelyn, whose blond hair shone gold in the moonlight. His lips parted in a stiff smile.

"She is worth it," was his thought, as he came up the steps of the porch.

He was greeted shyly by the lady of his heart; effusively, by her three companions.

"You have come to take her away," said Christine, the hostess.

"But only a little way—just across the lawn to the next house."

"But some day you will take her farther than that, you thief!"

The blood within him surged at the word, although his face was calm and his eyes took on a glint of steel. For a moment, the laughing Christine had a vision of something that made her catch her breath.

As the young pair went away, the three girls gazed after them.

"He is so handsome," said one.

"A mate for her, our Evelyn," said another.

But Christine, wise Christine, mused.

"I wonder—" she began, and stopped.

II

WHEN the lovers reached the dark house, they crossed the threshold and went into a great room, where two candles cast pale gleams over the polished floor, and where a tall, gilt-framed mirror intensified by ghostly reflection the length and bareness. A wolfhound was stretched in front of the wavering fire, for the night was cool. He rose, and went to meet his mistress.

Evelyn sat down, and drew the dog's head to her lap.

"Do you remember him, Neil?" she said.

"Is it Alex?" he asked, and came over and knelt beside them, and patted the dog's rough coat. "He was such a long-legged puppy when I went away, Evelyn, five years ago, and, when you stood on the terrace and waved good-bye, he had hold of the end of your fur and was worrying it. I can see now just how you looked, with your hair blowing back under your red hat, still and tall and straight and beautiful—oh, Evelyn!"

He let the dog go, and turned to her, still kneeling. His dark head was level with her own, and his gray eyes looked into hers with something of their old boyish appeal.

"If you had only loved me then," he said.

"But I am yours now."

There was a flush on her cheeks and light in her eyes. But he rose to his feet, a little frown on his forehead.

"It is different now," he said, shortly, and sat down in a big chair on the other side of the fire.

She leaned toward him. "You mean," she said, slowly, "that then you were not rich?"

The flush was deeper now, but the light had died out. The note of trouble in her voice melted him.

"I mean that I have lost five good years out of my life, because you did not know your own mind, little girl."

He reached over and took her hand. On the third finger was a little ring, a ring with a bit of red stone, like a drop of blood.

"I must get you a finer one," he said, and drew it from her finger.

"Poor little ring," he said. "You would not take it, you remember, Evelyn, until I promised that it should bind you to nothing. It was to be a reminder merely of our friendship. How young we were, Evelyn!"

She laughed, but there was a strained note in her mirth.

"But we are young yet, Neil."

"Are you?" he asked, curiously. "I am not. I shall never be really young again. You don't know how fast I

lived when I was out there looking for gold. It's a hardening thing. Every man is fighting, and the fight is not for honor or country or principle"—his voice was bitter—"but for money, money, money! And a man gets to the point at last where he thinks gold and dreams gold and would sell his soul for gold——"

He had dropped her hand and was staring straight into the fire.

"And, sometimes, when I was out there, I would imagine what my life might have been in those five years. I should have continued my father's practice—I believe yet that I should have made a better doctor than financier, Evelyn, and we could have lived where our ancestors lived—a quiet life, with no deeds to blacken our consciences——"

She looked up, startled by the suggestion in his tone, but he rose and paced back and forth in front of her. The dog, too, rose and looked at him steadily, wagging his tail as if in doubt of the masterful creature who was destroying the peace of the hearth.

Suddenly, Neil stopped and leaned against the mantel-shelf. He looked down on the drooping head, on the exquisite line of the oval face and white neck.

"Come here," he said, masterfully, and she rose and went to his side.

With a quick change of mood, he laughed.

"What a patient Griselda!" he said, and touched her hair, lightly, with his fingers. "You have changed a bit since I went away. Then, you were the one who commanded."

"The queen is dead—long live the king," she said, and made him a mocking bow.

The fire flared up quickly. For a moment, Evelyn stood bathed in the yellow light. From her shining head to the tip of her slipper, she seemed to radiate gleams.

Neil's eyes worshiped.

"My golden girl!" he said.

With a little cry, she sank, shuddering, into her chair.

"Don't!" she pleaded, with her hands

before her face. "Don't call me that again. It only adds to my degradation!"

He turned to her, swiftly.

"Evelyn," he demanded, "what do you mean?"

Then, as her eyes drooped before the stern question in his, he knew.

"So it is the money, after all?" His tone was wistful rather than accusing. "I had hoped I might win a little love, too, Evelyn."

"You could not believe me if I said I loved you, Neil. You know I would not marry you five years ago when you were poor. I am willing to marry you now. What else can you think?"

Then, all at once, she burst into tears.

"I hate your money! I hate it, Neil," she said.

He drew a quick breath.

"If we could only blot out the five years, Evelyn. If I could come to you again as a boy—oh, what a dreamer I was!—with clean hands, and offer myself. Evelyn, what else did you want that I could not give you then—the pure first love and the strength to work honestly for you? I have money now, but I would give it all for the faith I had then!"

He knew that he was saying too much, but he could not stop. The stream of his pent-up bitterness had found an outlet, and would not be stayed.

She was gazing at him, white-lipped, but he went on, recklessly:

"There is something else I must tell," he said. "I knew I should confess it some time, and I might as well do it now. The money is tainted—Thurston, my partner, was confiding, and I took advantage of him, and worked his discoveries for my benefit. Oh, I know a man of the world would think I had done nothing dishonest, but I was brought up with old-fashioned ideas, and—my father would not have done the things I have done, Evelyn."

It seemed to him that he had said all there was to say, but, in the silence that followed, he found himself reiterating, dully:

"That is what five years have done for me, Evelyn. That is why I want to blot them out. God knows I want to blot them out!"

She was stunned by his revelations. He had not reproached her, but she knew that the burden of his sin was upon her.

"I am going away again, Evelyn," he said, and he rose and stood before her. "I thought, when I came back, that you might love me. Perhaps you do. Perhaps, if there were no money between us, you would come to me, after all, without it. I don't know. You don't know. I distrust you, and you distrust yourself—and—so—it is hopeless."

He started to the door, then came back and leaned over her chair.

"Don't worry, dear little child," he said.

For one moment, he laid his face against her soft hair. She could not see the yearning tenderness of his expression.

"But I must go," he said, as he straightened himself sharply.

"Yes," she echoed, "you must go—"

Then he left her.

As he went down the path, he heard, from the porch next door, the babble of girlish voices. Christine and the other Graces were again discussing the engagement.

"If we were as happy," sighed one wistful voice.

"If—" from another.

"Some day, perhaps," said Christine, hopefully.

"Some day," came the breathless chorus, as Neil fled into the darkness.

III

He rose at dawn, after a sleepless night. His trunk stood packed and strapped at the door, ready for his early departure.

He dressed quickly, and went out into a dew-washed world. The sky was opal tinted, and the earth a misty gray. The waking birds twittered soft

notes. Bag in hand, Neil began his walk to the station. At the gate he stopped, and looked back at the home of his fathers, at the long, low house, with the white pillars, where generations of gentlemen had feared God and saved human life. And he was leaving it, the first man in the family who had not been willing to take up an existence of good deeds and quiet endeavor.

Into his heart came the cry of the first man, "The woman tempted me—" He wheeled about, and faced the house on the other side of the road. With shutters still closed, it seemed asleep. Somewhere behind the curtains of that upper window, Evelyn lay—his love. All unworthy thoughts slipped from him. She had not guessed his weakness, and to what she was sending him—this little child whom he had known as a lad. "God bless her," he said, and, with the benediction, he left the old houses behind.

As he tramped along, he planned, doggedly, his scheme of life. He would throw himself into practical things. There was excitement in money-getting, therefore he would get more money. He would not buy Evelyn, but there were others who could be bought, and, when he needed a stately mistress for his home, he would seek such a woman, and, eliminating love and romance, he would make a good husband. He would grow cold and forbidding and frozen, a very iceberg of a man.

So does youth plan in its despair. But not to man belongs the shaping of his destiny. Led by some fore-ordained impulse, Neil turned from the quiet street for a short cut through a lane—a lane hedged with wild roses. At the end stood a cottage. It was a little, white, painted structure with a bit of green in front. The door was open, and, as Neil walked toward it, he looked straight into the interior.

At a table spread with a clean, white cloth, sat a young man in working clothes. With his ruddy face and his bright curls, he looked like a young god—the God of Prosperous

Labor. On each side of him were children, curly-headed, too, and with fresh-washed faces. Out of the shadows came a woman, rosy, smiling. She held a steaming dish in her hand, and set it before the man. Then she took her place opposite him.

The children folded their hands. The heads of the four were bowed, and out on the sweet morning air floated the sound of the man's strong voice, softened with reverence.

Mechanically, Neil uncovered his head, and tears sprang to his eyes. It was such a homely little scene!—but the man going his solitary way would have given all his gold for the treasure possessed by the laborer in blue overalls.

Half-hidden by the hedge, Neil sat down where he could watch. The meal was not a long one, and, when the man had finished, he rose and leaned over his wife. She raised her lips to him, simply, and Neil turned away his eyes, for the little rite was sacred. When he looked again, the man was at the gate, with the children nodding like two flowers at the top while the woman stood in the doorway and waved good-bye. Then she went in, the children following, and they disappeared in the shadowy interior.

Left alone, there came to Neil a sudden revelation. That was the sum of life, after all—love and a home and a clear conscience before God.

He turned, and went swiftly back up the lane and out into the road, and with every retracted step his heart cried, "Evelyn, Evelyn!"

When he reached her gate, the wolfhound met him with uplifted ears.

"Let me come in and wait for her, old fellow," said Neil, as he passed with joyous step.

But he did not have to wait, for he found her there in the garden, white

and wan with a night that had been sleepless.

She rose, quickly, and the red flamed into her cheeks. Neil went up to her, and took her hands in his.

"I have come back, Evelyn," he said; "I have come back."

He drew her closer, and she came with questioning eyes.

"I have come back because I know that we were both wrong. I have come back, not as the man who buys to the woman who sells, but as the man who loves to the woman who loves. It isn't gold, dear, but love that is worth while, and, if you thought differently, it was not for me to leave you in error, but to teach you better. I am going to give up the money, Evelyn—send it to Thurston. He will call me a fool—quixotic—but it burns my fingers. And I am going to live in the home of my fathers, and you are to live there with me, and I will drive my old horse from door to door—a man of my race."

The words had come in a torrent, but he stopped at the sight of her face, there was about it a white radiance that touched while it uplifted him.

"You knew me better than I knew myself, Neil," she said. "Oh, wicked me——"

"Oh, perfect you!" he said, tenderly, and bent his strong young face to hers.

In the house adjoining, a shutter opened, and Christine, sleepy-eyed, peered out over the sunlighted gardens.

"Oh!" she said, suddenly, and drew the muslin curtains close. Then, to the two half-awakened ones within, she told what she had seen.

"How ideal!" they murmured, drowsily.

"How real!" said Christine, the wise Christine.



NO TIME TO LOSE

CADDINGTON—Have you seen my new play?

CLUBBERLY—No; but I suppose if I want to see it I must go right away.

RENUNCIATION

DO right, sweetheart, and persevere,
 With steadfast eye and brow austere.
 Apart our ways forever lie;
 We must remember—you and I—
 So shall we keep our conscience clear.

And then, without reproach or fear
 We'll drift asunder, year by year;
 But, once—before we say good-bye,
 Do write, sweetheart.

Of course, in such exalted sphere
 I do not care fond words to hear;
 Yet in my heart is just one cry
 For one dear name before I die;
 So in the letter—oh, my dear,
 Do write, "sweetheart."

CAROLYN WELLS.



A FALLING STAR

FIRST THEATRICAL MANAGER (*poetically*)—Why did you drop that
 star from your theatrical firmament?

SECOND THEATRICAL MANAGER—She wanted the earth.



ONE ON THE ACTOR

REPORTER—What do you do for exercise?
 TRAGEDIAN—I act, sir.

REPORTER—But don't you get any regular exercise?



WHERE THEY USUALLY COME FROM

BRIGGS—Panhandle is a connoisseur in French wines, isn't he?
 GRIGGS—He ought to be. He has lived in California all his life.

THE MAXIMS OF METHUSELAH

BEING THE ADVICE GIVEN BY THE PATRIARCH IN HIS NINE HUNDRED, SIXTY AND NINTH YEAR, TO HIS GREAT-GRANDSON, SHEM, IN REGARD TO WOMEN

By Gelett Burgess

MY SON, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee, all women shall be as one woman to thee, *and she easy.*

2 Seek one woman whom thou canst trust, and to her who loveth thee best, tell thy secrets. She will deliver thee from strange women, she will expose their craft; and of her who flattereth thee will she make known the reason.

3 For woman understandeth woman, and man she understandeth; only *her-self* doth she know not.

4 When thou findest her whom thou canst trust, go, *but return* away. Smile upon her, even across the chamber when thou art encompassed about by beauty; when women admire thee, then shalt thine eye seek *her* out. Across the dining-table shalt thou make thy sign, that her heart may not sicken utterly. She shall possess thy secret glance;

5 When thou puttest on glad raiment, when thou anointest thy hair, then shalt thou seek *her* ere thou goest thy way to the feast; and when thou departest therefrom, then shalt thou return to her, bearing thy tale. She shall interpret thy dreams.

6 Seek not to deceive her, lest she surely *find thee out.* For she knoweth thy ways, and is wise. Put thy trust in her and she will reward thee; be as a child unto her, and she will expose all the doings of her sex.

7 For it is better to be betrayed seventy times seven, than to believe *all*

women are false: yea, it is more affording.

8 The fool sayeth in his heart, all women are liars; but I say unto thee, *two* good women friends are worth the prayers of a million saints.

9 ¶I went into the chamber of a maiden, and there were many photographs; on the writing-desk and the mirror and the mantel were many strange faces, but *I discovered not mine own.*

10 And I rejoiced, saying, lo, I am at the head of the procession.

11 Again I entered yet another chamber of a different damsel, in her abode I made my way privily; and behold, *I saw my photograph* displayed in a frame of fine gold and ornaments of rubies.

12 And I cried aloud in my shame and waxed hot, saying, alas that I am become an *huckleberry*, for she useth me to her own end; I am as the geography of the school-boy behind which he hideth his dime-novel. She wantoneth with me, fooling her friends.

13 ¶No woman *with a figure* hath an unsullied reputation amongst her sex.

14 To give birth to a babe is her short cut to omniscience,

15 For she who hath had children contemneth her who *hath not*, yea, she despiseth her in her heart, she counteth her as naught.

16 ¶There be three things which are too difficult for me, yea, four which *I know not:*

17 The way of a woman *with nerves;*

the way of a maid with a dressmaker; the way of a damsel bidding farewell; and the way of a matron who *understandeth* baby-talk.

18 There be three things which never satisfy a woman, yea, four things say not, *it is well enough*:

19 Her name; and the sight in her mirror; a novel with a sad end; and a lover who sayeth not continually, *I love thee*.

20 It is easier to find a woman content with her raiment than one who is satisfied with *all* her names. For Susan desireth to be called Huldah, and Sarah, Lydia.

21 ¶My son, waste no time trying to fool a woman, for it is easier to *let her fool herself*.

22 When thou hast quarreled with her and she hath not belied thee to thy friends, *then* mayest thou say, she is to be trusted, she is whiter than snow.

23 For a woman and a mouse, they carry a tale wherever they go.

24 Remember also, that the sun must not see what the moon sees, nor the piazza know what the divan knoweth. Illumine not with words of light the deeds of darkness.

25 Go to the couch-cushion, thou tattler; consider its ways, and be wise:

26 Which, having seen and heard *divers curious things*, telleth naught; nor will a slap on its face provoke it to revelation.

27 ¶Son, in my youth I kissed a maiden of the Land of Nod, and she said unto me, *doest thou this alway*, and with every damsel dost thou assuage thy desire?

28 Then I waxed bold and answered her, yea, even *every one* do I kiss, and not one do I not desire;

29 And she laughed and was comforted, *believing me not*, nor desiring to

believe me. She was content with her pride.

30 Offer to every woman a fitting excuse *in season*, that she may clothe her shame; let her not suffer for her indiscretions.

31 ¶Hurry not a woman's favor, neither force thou her haste. For she goeth *into love* as she goeth into the waters at the seashore; first a toe and then an ankle goeth she in by littles till she be wetted. She diveth not, she jumpeth not from the pier, but by gentle *shocks* and screams she entereth slowly;

32 Yet when the waters of love rise about her, then will she *cling to thee* and be supported. She swimmeth in her joy, she floateth upon the tide of happiness.

33 For all her lines are drawn in pleasant places.

34 ¶When thou callest upon a damsel for the first time, see that thou goest *alone*, for a first call bringeth about often wondrous things. Hunt not in couples, lest thou gettest not acquainted.

35 Eschew letters of introduction, which are the methods of fools. Be sure that she desireth thee, and visit her *alone*. Then shall she make herself known to thee privily.

36 The fool trieth a maid with wiles before he kisseth. He toucheth her hand warily, he sitteth near. But a bolder one feareth not; he jumpeth up, he runneth across the chamber and falleth upon her with suddenness. She is *astonied*:

37 And she slappeth his face.

38 But the man of understanding heedeth *a sign*. It is revealed to him what he shall do, and when he becometh three parts sure, then he proceedeth. For the three parts are herself, and the fourth is all women.

39 And even indifference hath succeeded where ardor hath failed.



PARTNERS

TED—Did he tell you he was broke?

NED—Not exactly; but he said he had a great scheme to make money.

THE KING'S HIGHWAY

AT the call of the early morning, beneath a rose-red sky,
Into the King's Highway we rode, my little Love and I,
And up and down the wide Highway, thick-veiled in silver dew,
With nodding heads that greeted us, the King's white lilies grew.

Afar the blue sea whispered low, the wind blew fresh and strong,
We heard the bell for matins call, we heard the lark's clear song;
With quip and mirth we galloped on, nor spared us time to pray
Before the beckoning crucifix which marks the King's Highway.

Her eyes that fondly challenged mine outshone the sapphire sea,
And amber-gold her braided hair fell softly to her knee;
A friar dropped his beads to gaze, a passing knight gave heed,
And none upon the broad Highway but wished us twain God-speed.

But as we paused beside the stream to rest with slackened rein,
There flashed along the great Highway the King with noisy train.
A backward glance . . . he turned, and rode straight to the water's edge,
And, raising high his huntsman's cap, he set my Love a pledge.

He drew the lily from his cloak; it fell like drifted snow
(Right loud he laughed to see my frown) across her saddle bow;
She tore the roses from her breast; their crimson petals lay
Like drops of blood—my heart's red blood—upon the King's Highway.

Like drops of blood the rubies flashed upon his bridle hand,
He caught the rein that from her grasp fell loose upon the sand.
Eyes spake to eyes, and swift away . . . nor word nor sign to me,
Adown the dusty King's Highway they galloped toward the sea.

At vesper chime one rode alone with slow and lagging tread,
Nor marked the strange, crushed sweetness from the lilies torn and dead;
From his good steed in agony he flung him down to pray
Before the broken crucifix which marks the King's Highway.

MERIBAH PHILBRICK ABBOTT.



SAVED HIMSELF

SHE—How did you come to be such a good judge of human nature?
HE—When I was young I acquired the habit of not reading.

A ROSE SONNET—WITH THORNS

SWEETHEART, I bring a crimson rose to you,
 Fragrant as June, its heart with honey sweet,
 The golden secret of my love *(Repeat
 The rhyme and make the fourth line end with true.)*

I found it smiling in the morning's dew,
 Its red lips parted *(Here the old conceit
 About her mouth will make the line complete.)*
 Take it and learn its message ever new.

Be yours the voice to cheer its day and bless
 Its life with rapture, song and *(I regret
 That I must skip again to)* happiness:
 Close to your bosom, rose on white rose set,
 It shall make music for your heart *(I guess
 I'll have to stop: the climax, I forget.)*

FELIX CARMEN.



A MONEY SAVER

CRABSHAW—He said it cost him many a pang to cut aloof from his poor relations.

CRAWFORD—Then why did he do it?

CRABSHAW—Because that cost him less than putting them on their feet.



NO WONDER

WAGGLES—He tried several dieting fads because he thought he had dyspepsia.

JAGGLES—Well?

WAGGLES—Now he has it.



MODERN IMPROVEMENTS

OPTIMIST—The rich no longer trample on the poor.

PESSIMIST—No, in these days they run them down in their autos.

THEY THAT GO DOWN IN STORMS

By Harriet L. Huntington

TOGETHER they stood on the narrow, high-railed iron balcony, and looked out over the sea. On every side it stretched away to the level horizon, dull and gray and sullen beneath a lowering sky. Straight under their feet it tumbled uneasily against the smooth rock that descended unbroken from the foundation wall of the cottage. Behind them the long, swinging windows, each reaching to the floor, opened out from the wide living-room upon this wonderful balcony hung in mid-air over the edge of the ocean.

It was a strange cottage, so closely and consistently fitted into its angle of rock that it seemed a natural part of the promontory which must have been an unusual and awkward-looking piece of nature's mason-work without it. Indeed, it was just that gaping and unfinished appearance that had suggested and invited this manner of completion to the original designer and owner of the house. Very little blasting had been necessary. The rocky walls that closed the lower story on two sides had been smoothed off, the stony floor leveled, excavations had been cut and holes drilled, and at length the building had been mortised and clamped and braced and riveted into position, strong and secure against any gale that might blow.

To the south, it made one line with the front of the bluff as it rose sheer from the water, broken only by this narrow balcony. On the east, the first floor opened upon a wide platform of rock sloping back, ragged and uneven and easy to climb, to the highest ridge, that extended for a short

distance nearly level with the house-top. The upper story stood clear of immediate contact with the rocks, which still rose shelteringly near on north and west. On the western side, a doorway opened upon a narrow, protected space, and, from this, rough-hewn steps, guarded by a high iron rail, ascended to the summit of the ridge. There the railing was continued along the pathway that ran the length of the promontory head, down its long, jagged northern slope, and across the boulder-piled neck that connected it with the mainland.

From the cottage itself, no view was possible in any direction save of sea and sky and rock. From the ridge that rose back of it could be seen the whole peninsula-like shape of the headland, the narrow isthmus with little more than the guarded pathway left bare at the highest tides, and the barren shore of the mainland stretching in uneven masses to westward, and rounding quickly out of sight beyond another rocky point to the northeast.

A freshening breeze swept over the water, here and there lifting a dark line above the level to break into a gleam of white before it fell again; and the woman leaned closer to the man, with low exclamations of awe and wonder.

"It is a marvelous place, beyond all my imaginings!"

The man held her against his side, and he no longer looked at the ocean.

"You are pleased with it, then? Will you be content to come here next Summer? Do you think we can be happy here?"

It needed only the look in her eyes to answer him to his full satisfaction.

"That is all I wanted to know," he went on, in a tone of relief. "It worried me a little to think I had bought the whole thing outright on such an impulse. I wanted to feel that there would be a place ready for us when we got back, but I couldn't go away in peace without having you see it, and knowing that it suited you."

"I shall like it better than Europe," she said, with a deep breath. "Just we two! It will be so easy to forget that little strip that leads to all the world beyond—the world that we do not need!"

His arm tightened around her.

"Darling! If all I can ever do for you can make up to you——"

She laid a finger on his lips.

"I am so glad you brought me to see it now! I shall remember every detail of it, and, when we grow tired with our journeyings through strange lands, I shall close my eyes and rest in the thought of what we are coming back to. Then, when we are here again, and settled and grown used to it, how we shall love to live over the scenes of the Winter! Every joy will be doubled!"

"I knew you would share my feelings," he said, triumphantly.

She turned to scrutinize the house.

"Do you know anything about the people who built it? Why did they choose such a lonely spot?"

"They were man and wife. It is said they seemed to care little for the world."

"Do you believe they loved each other as we do? . . . Why did they give it up?"

He hesitated. "She—they went away, I believe. Would you like to go through the house? I understand everything is as they left it. When we come back, you shall have it refitted to your taste."

She did not stir at once, but stood in deep meditation, her hands clasped before her.

"I wonder if they are as happy somewhere else? It seems to me I should

always rather be here alone with just you than——"

"I am glad I bought it," he interrupted. "Come and look inside."

Almost the entire first floor formed one great room, furnished with a sort of wild luxury that at once befitted and defied its surroundings. The polished floor was thickly covered with rich Oriental rugs and skins; gorgeously cushioned divans and heavy, carved-wood settles were scattered about. A huge fireplace framed in tiles of strangely stamped, vari-colored clay filled one end of the room. Tall, wrought-brass candlesticks and sculptured jars of terra-cotta stood in the corners and angles. Against the rough, dark walls gleamed bits of antique marble.

They looked and wondered, and went on up-stairs. Here were sleeping-rooms, and the kitchen and dining-room, one well stocked with utensils, the other with linen and china, and even some silver. Much of the tableware was foreign and curious; everything betokened a widely cultured, if eccentric, taste.

"This was ordered and meant for us from the beginning," declared the man, in a burst of enthusiasm. "We could never better these things, could we?"

The woman turned to him eagerly from the closet she was exploring.

"It is the most fascinating place I ever dreamed of!" she cried. "Dearest, why can't we stop here to-night? I can't bear to leave it so soon."

"How can we?" he remonstrated. "You know we sail in two days."

"We can go down on an early train in the morning; we shall really lose very little time. Surely you have your arrangements nearly completed, and I can easily be ready. I want to stay—it would seem like a real adventure! We could imagine ourselves two castaways on a desert island!"

He smiled. "Yes, we could easily imagine that, for of course we should have nothing to eat."

She looked crestfallen for a moment, but her face brightened again.

"You can drive back to the village

and get some things. We sha'n't need much."

"Would you send me back over those four desolate miles for a few biscuit and some tinned meat? That would probably be all I could get."

"The adventure will be more realistic if the fare is simple! But I think you can do better than that; I saw a little bakery there. Oh, darling, please! We may never have another chance to do such a delightful, unpremeditated thing. Besides, it can never be so romantic again—this is our first visit to our own house! Is the prospect so little to your taste? Wouldn't you like to stay to-night in this wild, eerie spot—with me?"

She clung to his arm, beseeching him with bright, tender eyes, with flushed cheeks and exquisite, pouting lips.

He yielded, half-laughing at himself as his arms went around her.

"Will you go with me for the biscuit?"

"No, because I want to finish exploring. There are all sorts of things in those pantries, and I shall get out whatever is available, and have the table ready for you on your return—since you think so much about your supper! You won't mind the little discomfort, will you? Don't you suppose we could find driftwood enough for a little fire in that remarkable fireplace? Oh, you've no idea how cozy we shall be, and I shall treat you very, very nicely for being so good to me!"

"I have to do whatever makes you happy. You know that, don't you?"

She made two lists for him, one of necessities and one of desirabilities, as she explained. Then she climbed the stone steps with him to see him off. At the summit of the ridge they paused, and she grasped her fluttering skirts while he looked up at the gloomy sky and across the swelling water.

"I am afraid we shall have a stormy night," he said.

She lifted her head, and looked at him with eyes grown suddenly big and dark.

"Did storms ever yet do anything to us but drive us closer?" she asked.

He caught her, and strained her to him, kissing her passionately.

"No, and they never shall! I don't like to leave you, even for a little while."

She drew away from him, catching her breath in the effort to speak lightly again.

"The rock is solid, is it not, and the house is safe?"

"The worst storm in five years barely sent its spray to the balcony rail, they tell me."

Her eyes turned to where the waves were piling in clamorously over the outlying boulders of their isthmus.

"It must be near flood-tide now."

"Not for an hour or more." His eyes followed hers. "There won't be a very wide promenade left by that time. I may have to be your Leander, and swim across to you."

"Don't jest about it. You said the path was never covered."

"No, there's no danger. Don't stay up here in this wind."

"Only until you start. Don't be gone long; I shall be watching for you."

She waited while he ran down the rocks and across to the mainland. The stable was there, and the carriage in which they had come out. She saw him drive out and turn the horse's head westward. He looked over to her, and, waving one hand, started for the village. She returned to the house.

There were many yet unsearched recesses about the kitchen and dining-room to engage her interest. She laid the table with the choicest she could find, and laughed as she wondered what strange viands these rich settings would grace.

She had been busy for some time and oblivious to all outside her immediate surroundings, when her consciousness at last woke to the recognition of certain persistently repeated sounds in the lower part of the house. Startled, but not frightened, she ran down the stairs. The wind had been rising, and was coming in sharp gusts through the long, open windows which

now and then slammed smartly to, only to be at once blown wide again. Every loose bit of drapery in the room was flapping violently, the rugs were in disorder, and all small articles had been overturned or whirled into the corners. She hastened to close and fasten the windows, finding that it took all her strength to do it. She did not notice the heavy, wooden shutters that could be bolted across them from the inside, nor would she at that time have put them in place had she seen them.

Instead, she stood gazing out, fascinated by the sight before her. In place of an occasional whitecap, the whole surface of the water was barred by long stripes of foaming breakers, and the spaces of dark water between seemed to lessen even as she looked. Almost under her feet she could hear the heavy thud of the waves as they struck the straight wall of rock, and the wild splash that followed as they leaped in air and fell back again. All around her came the sound of water breaking against, or tumbling over, or surging into, the crevices of the defiant rock, and, mingling with it, the spiteful whistle of the wind.

Her spirits rose in excitement. So there was to be a storm indeed! And what a spot from which to behold it! Far better than being at sea, for here one was not only safe, but solidly and comfortably grounded, and could enjoy the spectacle as serenely as from a box at the play. She gave a little shudder, and was thankful it should come just before they sailed, rather than just after.

Her next thought sent her up-stairs and out through the west door. In that sheltered spot between the house and the rock the wind could scarcely enter, but, as she mounted the stone steps, she felt it catching first her hair and then her dress, and when she came out on the ridge she had to grasp firmly at the railing to steady herself. There was a strange exhilaration in this rush of wind and turbulence of water; she felt a physical delight in the power and freedom of it. Mighty

nature, the elemental forces, here was what she felt akin to! Here the soul could know itself and its rights, without pretense or restraint!

She looked across to the mainland, longing, in the midst of her exultation, for the one who would understand and share it. The carriage was not in sight; it was hardly time. A glance at the low isthmus showed, to her surprise, that every foot of the central pathway was wet with the flying spray that fell on it like rain. If he should come now, before the tide began to recede, he would not find the passage pleasant. Already, too, she was beginning to realize how chill and searching was the wind, and her mind quickly roused to the need of creature comforts not yet provided.

Into the house she went again, down to the first floor, and there in a store-room she found fuel for the fireplace—not driftwood, but substantial logs and sticks fit to give warmth and cheer in stormy weather. They were heavy and awkward to handle, but by dint of patient effort she succeeded in laying the fire. The kindling of it was another troublesome matter, and, when the smoke finally consented to go up the chimney instead of coming out into the room, and the flickering blaze grew steady, she knew that much time had passed. The tumult outside had grown fiercer, and suddenly she felt the solitude no longer endurable.

She rushed up the stairs. This time the door resisted her; she pushed it open, and stepped out into a small whirlwind that eddied around in the narrow space, and twisted her skirts about her so that it was with difficulty she could ascend the steps, even with the aid of the rail. The sky hung low and heavy. Although it was not night, there seemed to be no daylight anywhere, yet every object stood clearly outlined with a dark and menacing distinctness. The roar of the gale and the crash of water on every side were deafening in her ears. On the neck, every wave that came up swept nearly across the pathway, and, before its

spent waters could retreat, another followed and drove farther.

Smitten with awful fear, the woman clutched the rail with a grip that bruised her delicate hands, and strained her eyes as far as they could see along that empty roadway to the westward. The veering blasts buffeted and shook her till she was seized with a panic of terror lest she be blown from her hold. Clinging cautiously to the railing, she battled her way down and into the house again, but she could not rest there, listening blindly to that fearful uproar. Somewhere he was coming to her, and she must watch for him.

She knew she could not stand long alone against that hurricane, so she stripped from one of the beds a linen sheet, twisted it diagonally from corner to corner, and wound it around her waist. Holding the ends in her hands, she once more struggled up to the highest point of the ridge, and there she made herself fast to the iron rail, knotting the sheet securely about it.

Still no moving thing appeared upon the mainland, and still the tempest increased in violence. She knew now that a carriage could not stand with this wind striking flat against its side. What might have happened she dared not think; only, she knew that somehow he would come to her. The water was now washing clean over the isthmus, and where there had been such boisterous churning among the lesser boulders, the tide poured strong and full. As far as she could see the ocean was one turmoil of seething, frothing white. The breakers came in hung with ropes of matted spume; when they struck the rocks, they rose in air with a noise like thunder, and sent their foam and spray flying far. Thick, clotted masses were blown along the rocks until they found lodgment under some projection, and there clung and collected in great patches of dirty white, too solidly beaten up and driven together to lose their form.

A spatter of fine spray struck her face, and she turned in surprise to find its source; it seemed impossible that

any wave could drive to this height. Not far from where she stood was a spot where the rock dropped down straight for some fifteen or twenty feet, and then went off in a long, sloping incline that ran out for some distance into the sea, with higher rocks boxing it in on either side. When they first came over to the cottage, they had stopped to admire the way the water ran, smooth and green, up the long incline, curving upward to show the exquisite, pale, transparent tint of aquamarine, and at last breaking into a thin crest of foam and instantly tumbling backward. Now the boiling surge chased furiously up the whole length of the slope; she could hear the shock as it hurled against the straight wall, and flung its spray high over the edge of the cliff to her. Nothing more serious could result from this than a slight wetting, but it added one more feature to her physical discomfort. The wind had loosened her hair, and blew it blindly across her face; it dragged at her garments until her limbs ached and her body grew sore with the strain of the twisted sheet around it.

She had waited and endured an hour, nearly two hours, when a crawling speck came into sight far down the road. He was on foot and alone, staggering slowly with bent head against the tremendous buffets of the wind. She could see that he had parcels in his arms. When he reached the path that led down to the neck, he looked up and saw her. Then she shouted to him: "Don't try to cross! Wait where you are safe!"

She could barely hear the sound of her own voice, but it seemed to her that the wind might carry her words to him. She fancied that he caught them. He put his hand to his mouth, trumpet-wise, as if shouting some reply, but no sound reached her. He came to the edge of that raging tide, and, as he stepped down into it, she called again:

"Don't, darling! For my sake, wait!"

But he came on. The water surged

about his knees; he pulled his hat closer, and bent his head lower as the driving spray pelted him like hail. A wave, higher than the rest, struck him on the chest, and beat him back against the rail. He reeled, and clung until it passed over. The parcels had gone. Then he advanced again, and the woman cried aloud:

"O God, help him! Bring him safely through! He must not go down; he is mine! Bring him to me! I couldn't live without him. We have been through so much, and our love has been stronger than anything else in the world. You shall not take him from me now!"

A second mighty wave struck him. His head was bare now; he lifted it, and looked at her once more. His lips moved; he was trying to make some sign to her.

"My darling, I would come to you if I could! O Love! to be together once more, if only to drown so! O God, listen to me! You must not let him go down alone! Why should you punish him? It was all my fault! Forgive us if we did wrong—I couldn't help it that I loved him so! I didn't want to harm any one. How could it be wrong when our love was so beautiful? Let him live now, let him come through safely, and we will be so quiet and careful never to hurt any one again! I can't promise any more than that, dear Lord! I couldn't make him leave me now! Punish us some other way! Take everything else, but let us live and die together!"

In the agony of her prayer, her head bowed for an instant upon the railing. She lifted it to see a billow more dreadful than any before it rolling in upon him, and in the same moment she was blinded by a heavy shower of spray from the spouting rock. When she drew her hands across her smarting eyes and looked again, there was nothing to be seen save the welter of water between herself and the mainland. A section of the iron railing that had showed above the water was gone.

She stared at that spot through time that might have been seconds or

eternities, but nothing that was missing reappeared.

Then she lifted her face to the heavens, and shrieked her last defiance:

"God, I hate you!"

For a while everything was black around her, and the raving of the tempest seemed subdued to a soft, murmuring lullaby that rose and fell in soothing cadence. Then, piercing through her drowsiness, she heard him calling her. She started quickly to go down the rocks to meet him, but she was held fast by something twisted around her waist. With eager fingers she plucked at the restraining band.

"Wait, darling! I am coming!" she called back to him.

But in vain she strove to free herself. Gradually she came fully awake and alive to the facts that her fingers were numb and stiff with the cold and the stinging spray, and that the knotted linen had become so soaked with water and drawn so tightly by the tugging of the wind that she could never hope to undo it. She was possessed now of a frenzied longing to throw herself headlong from the bluff, to let the wind and waves have their will with her, but she could find no release. When she struggled, it seemed as if her body were being cut in two. Her feet ached wearily; she tried to shift her position, but every change hurt her more. The wet tangle of her hair blowing against her face annoyed her more than anything else; she wound it about her throat to keep it out of the way.

Black night had fallen, and still there was no abatement of the storm. The wind pounded on her breast with steady, sledgehammer blows, and the slow, heavy beating of her heart rose to meet it until it seemed as if between the two they must batter down that tired barrier of flesh. Cold and wet, hunger and thirst, fatigue and suffocation, pain and despair—how long must she endure this torture? Oh, to be at the end of it—to find him again! He had believed in God—along with all his love for her—and he had been

taken an easier way. But she had defied God—she ought not to have done that. His power was too great. If she had known—but perhaps it didn't matter so much, after all. Nothing really mattered, only to be able to lie down, here on the rocks—anywhere—and rest a little while.

Two days after, when the storm had gone down and the men from the life-saving station a mile below on the coast came up to see how the cottage

had weathered the gale, they found it practically wrecked. The long, unshuttered windows had been broken in, and the room flooded, the iron balcony was wrenched and twisted out of shape, one corner of the roof was gone.

And on the highest point of the ridge, swaying limply from the iron railing in the coil of a twisted sheet, with clothing half torn from her, and long hair dragging on the rocks, was the body of what had been a beautiful woman.



THE LENTEN LOVER

THOUGH my claims to being saintly
 Rest upon foundations slight;
 Though I fear I shine but faintly
 As a "dim, religious light;"
 Yet the season penitential
 Finds my footsteps churchward bent;
 Flames my sacred fire potential
 Friday afternoons in Lent.

Celia finds the same attraction,
 She comes regularly, too;
 And I thrill with satisfaction
 When she slips into her pew.
 Just to kneel, and watch her kneeling,
 Fills my soul with calm content.
 Can she, does she share my feeling
 Friday afternoons in Lent?

Am I blind or only stupid?
 In the chancel's painted sky
 Does that cherub change to Cupid?
 Does he wink a friendly eye?
 High to him an incense fragrant
 (Mostly of a violet scent)
 Rises, floats, and wanders vagrant
 Friday afternoons in Lent.

Celia loves the service dearly—
 She's a pillar of the church—
 I, a flying buttress, merely,
 I come chiefly for research.
 Ever Celia's heart pursuing,
 Ever on her love intent—
 Cherub, Cupid, speed my wooing
 Friday afternoons in Lent!

S. DECATUR SMITH, JR.

THE SPIDERS

CLOSE by Life's garden-side,
 Silently, ceaselessly,
 Tangling the hearts of men
 Deep in its meshes,
 Spinneth a spider.

Silently, ceaselessly,
 Weaving a web that is
 Fashioned of filminess,
 Sun-gleams and gossamers
 Dew-pearled and odorous;
 Weaving a web that is
 Frailer than mist at times,
 Steel-strong at others,
 Tangling the hearts of men
 Ever and hopelessly
 In its soft thonging,
 Spinneth the blithe-footed
 Spider of Love!

Close by Life's garden-side,
 Swiftly, relentlessly,
 Stifling the hearts of men
 In its thick meshes,
 Spinneth a spider.

Silently, ceaselessly,
 Swiftly, relentlessly,
 Weaving a web that is
 Dull-hued and lusterless;
 Weaving a web so dense
 Yet so impalpable,
 Soft and insidious,
 None may escape it—
 Spinneth the thousand-eyed,
 Eager, implacable,
 Gray, gaunt, and terrible
 Spider of Death!

HILTON R. GREER.



THE ONLY EXPLANATION

HOLT—Have you noticed how Gander has deteriorated lately?

BOLT—Yes; it must be his associations.

"It is. He has been flocking by himself."

A CRUCIFIED VENUS

By Zona Gale

"SHE certainly is a picture," admitted Mrs. Wesley Glover, unwillingly.

Mrs. Eustice comforted her.

"But, my dear, she's queer," she said. "I hear that she has astonishing ideas about things."

"Is it possible!" said Mrs. Glover, with surprised satisfaction. She did not know what the charge was, but there was a charge, and it pleased her.

"Yes, indeed," rejoined little Mrs. Eustice. She was a Southerner, and accented the "yes" bewitchingly. "About settlement work, and bohemianism and that sort of thing," she added, vaguely.

"Dear, dear, that's the trouble," said Mrs. Glover, "with not bringing up a child abroad. They become so Americanized. But Angelica is a picture," she reiterated, with a sigh.

Angelica, in the midst of her "coming-out" party, looked pretty enough not to have any ideas at all. Her simple white frock, her little ringless hands carrying nothing, and her bright hair caught in a coil low in her neck, made her appear singularly childish. She stood receiving with her mother, who was herself a young and beautiful woman, and people looked and smiled appreciatively when the two fair heads were together during a lull of the arrivals.

"Mother," Angelica was saying, "you are sure the Fairfields didn't come while I went to speak with Madame Clarke?"

"Of course, I am sure," said Mrs. Marbury, a trifle sharply. She had been standing for two hours. "What

in the world are you so interested in the Fairfields for, Angelica? They all ought to be in livery."

"I'm not at all interested in them," said Angelica, "but—ah!"

Three of the Fairfields were in the doorway. Angelica looked beyond them.

"Sydney is joining us here directly," said Edith Fairfield, tactlessly answering the look.

"And his friend?" asked Angelica, eagerly. "I hope he hasn't forgotten to bring Mr. Blair."

Edith Fairfield smiled in enjoyment. Angelica really was delicious.

"He is on the way," she assured Angelica, and half-turned away to select somebody with whom to share her suspicions. If Angelica were really to fall in love with Adrian Blair, wouldn't the skies fall?

"I haven't met him, you know," went on Angelica, innocently; "but I think his pictures are wonderful. Have you seen 'The Silent Woman'?"

"Yes, my dear," said Edith Fairfield. "It is a sweet thing, I admit, but so morbid!"

Angelica looked after her, curiously.

"How people love that word for everything they don't understand!" she thought.

Thereafter, she constantly watched the door, and when Sydney Fairfield came in, very late, she bewitched him with her candid pleasure at seeing him—until he presented Adrian Blair.

Adrian was in the late thirties, but he looked like a boy. His face, which was all depths and delicacies, had a kind of luminous beauty.

"How do you do?" said Angelica,

giving him her hand, which was not at all what she had meant to say.

"This is a great pleasure, Miss Marbury," said Adrian; which it was not, because he had not heard twice of Angelica, and he thought her merely pretty.

The next moment, he had passed on, and Angelica was greeting the bishop.

"But, oh, I wish I had said something to him!" she was saying to herself, under the bishop's beaming eyes. "I hope he knows that I could have said something!"

As for Adrian, he had already forgotten her. After making a leisurely round of the fast-thinning rooms, he and Sydney Fairfield had reached the door of the library, which was almost deserted.

"Sydney," said Adrian, "beyond there is the dining-room. I'm very hungry. I've eaten nothing since morning."

"Confound you!" growled Sydney. "Now, why the devil——?"

"Cut it, boy," said Adrian, wearily. "I'm not a beggar, at all. I'm merely a tramp. You may, however, hurry. I really do need food."

Sydney obediently disappeared toward the dining-room, and then Adrian turned, and unexpectedly faced Angelica. He regarded her for a moment, gravely, without flushing; but he saw by her own sudden color that she had heard what he said.

"I'm sorry you were here," he said, humbly. "I am sorry you heard what I said. That was rather ugly, wasn't it?"

"No," said Angelica, a little breathlessly, "I was only eager to come as soon as I could. I wanted to talk with you; to—to say things," said Angelica.

Immediately all Adrian's embarrassment forsook him. He saw in Angelica at once one of the young women who, attracted by his appearance and his dawning distinction, constantly sought him in what was really a novel sort of flirtation, but which they believed, or pretended to believe, was a series of confidences about ideals and problems of the spirit.

"I've felt that I could talk to you ever since I first saw your work!" said Angelica.

Adrian smiled, a little wearily. But why would they all do it? he wondered. When a girl was so extremely pretty as Angelica, why wasn't that enough without her always approaching him to "say things," and then never knowing what to say beyond a few incoherent rhapsodies and trite superficialities about beauty? He could have fallen in love with so many beautiful women if only, at a critical moment, he had not found them writing bad poetry about their rather worthless spiritual life. For, either because of his gravity or his half-unreal beauty, Adrian always drew from people confidences about their ideas of life and heaven, and, usually, love.

"If I dared," he said now to Angelica, seriously, "I would ask you why you need to say things—when you have that wonderful hair?"

Angelica regarded him with no perplexity. She had expected this. Nobody ever could understand that she was in earnest.

"I'm not like that," she said, simply. "Let me talk with you. I wanted to ask you to wait here for a few minutes. The others are nearly all gone, and I will come back."

Adrian bowed. "You don't know how you flatter me," he said.

Angelica turned to leave, and then she looked over her shoulder, uncertainly.

"And—I'm hungry, too," said Angelica, flushing. "Will you have something there—on the desk—for me, too, please?"

"Brava!" commented Adrian, as she left him. "How admirably she did it!" Then from Sydney, who returned at this minute, he took both plates.

"Don't come back for a little while," he said, setting them on the table.

"Has Edith cornered you?" asked Sydney, sympathetically. "Well, some of the others are on the veranda. I'll look in for you before I go."

The great rooms were empty, and it was easy for Angelica to slip away from

her mother's friends on the veranda. She came back with her white skirts over her arm, her eyes shining, and settled herself in the big leather chair which Adrian had placed before the desk.

"I really am hungry, you know," she said. "Débuts are wearing. A ravenous débutante—that doesn't sound very spirituelle of me, does it? What made you hungry?"

Adrian hesitated. Should he treat her, he wondered, as she was evidently longing to be treated, with the brutal frankness about homely details which passes pleasantly for the quality of being face to face? He decided that he must. He was not above it. Moreover, he was scrupulously conscientious about being to people whatever they expected of him, so long as it was picturesque.

"One has to pay for one's keep, you know," he was wont to say.

So now he took up his task with attention to every detail, and tried his best to live up to Angelica's idea of him.

"It's very bad taste to brag about being poor," said Adrian; "therefore, please don't make me. I am shockingly improvident, and very much in debt, and my pictures don't bring me in much—yet. And some days I really am—hungry. I was to-day. But I would rather you had not overheard me say so."

Angelica clapped her hands.

"Oh, splendid!" she cried. "How wonderful to be hungry!" And Adrian groaned in spirit. "But why are you sorry to tell me?" protested Angelica, in huge enjoyment. "Of course, you aren't ashamed of it?"

"A little," said Adrian; "but it is simply that it wasn't worth mentioning. I wouldn't mention to you, for instance, that there was a hole in my glove, if there were. There are better things to talk about."

"Yes," said Angelica, contentedly. "Shall we talk about them?"

"Oh, yes," assented Adrian, wearily. What a commonplace little thing she was! But she was so pretty that it

hardly mattered. Only—why would they all do it?

"Wasn't it dreadful," began Angelica, eating her bonbons delicately, "the things they all talked about to-day?"

Adrian raised his eyebrows. "Did they?" he asked. "What did they talk about?"

"Oh, about when they came back from where," said Angelica, "and about how crowded it was, and that there is nothing like getting back, after all. I heard at least seventy people say that the best part of going away is getting home."

"Yes," said Adrian, "I think so, too."

She stared a little.

"But I agree with you," went on Adrian, pleasantly, "that it is not necessary to say so. It is not necessary," he added, with half-shut eyes, "to say anything that is apparent—as what I am saying is."

Angelica was oblivious of the inference.

"That's just it," she said, eagerly; "with so many beautiful things to talk about, people are so commonplace!"

"Yes," agreed Adrian, sipping his punch.

Angelica looked at him, uncertainly. He was very difficult, she thought. She had expected that his face would light long ago with the discovery that she understood him.

Angelica leaned forward in the high oak chair, and clasped her hands on the arm.

"Mr. Blair," she said, "I've longed to meet you more than I can tell you. I somehow felt, when I saw your pictures, that you understood things, and that you loved the things that I do. I felt that I could talk to you about all the side of life that I love, and that all the people whom I am thrown with never think about. I knew that we should understand each other. But I ought to have remembered that I would have to prove myself to you first. You don't know anything about me, and, of course, you think that I

am like other girls who think they care for beautiful things when they don't at all. Now, you don't know how serious I am about all this. I'm not like the rest, really and truly."

In spite of the fact that every woman whom he knew had told him at some time that she was not like the rest, Angelica's earnestness really touched Adrian. Commonplace she might be, but she was sincere. For the first time, he spoke to her seriously.

"I do understand," he said. Adrian was probably born with that phrase on his lips. He did so understand everybody! "I do understand, and I will do my best. What do you want me to do?"

"Let me see you sometimes," said Angelica, childishly. "Let me talk with you about what I think and what I read. I've nobody in the world to whom I can talk about—those things. Perhaps some of the people I know could, but they cover it up as if they were ashamed. I'm proud of caring for beautiful things, and I—oh, I do so long to have somebody teach me! Beauty is about the only real thing in the world, don't you think so, Mr. Blair?"

Adrian winced, but when she rose and stood before him in her appealing prettiness, he looked down in the tremulous little face upturned to his, and he could no more resist saying what he did than he ever could resist saying the pictorial thing.

"I should so love to help you," he said, "if I am able. And I shall be able, for we both live in a world that is different from—theirs."

His heart smote him when he saw the eager, grateful look that leaped into her eyes. And, as he walked down-stairs behind Sydney, he thought, "Two weeks in town, and this little disciple is—what? The ninth, at least. How exactly alike they all do it!"

Yet, as he stepped into Sydney's hansom, he could not deny that Angelica's touch lingered pleasantly in his hand.

II

THEY met next at a dance, and a dance was that form of social gathering to which Adrian would cheerfully have preferred the grave. But the host had just had his portrait painted by Adrian, and his hostess was considering sitting for her own, and Adrian must live; so he danced.

He had been talking with Mrs. Eustice—who clasped her hands when she agreed about anything, and who always agreed—when he caught sight of Angelica. He was mildly astonished at the pleasure her presence gave him, but he explained it away on the score of her beauty.

"It is good to see you," said Adrian, sincerely, as soon as he could reach her side.

"I didn't dream that you would be here," cried Angelica, joyously; "I am so very glad!"

When their first dance came round, Adrian led the way unquestioningly to the conservatory.

"We have much to say, I am sure," he said. It had become second nature to him—this professional sympathy. "We would rather talk, would we not?" he added.

And Angelica, who loved to dance, heard her favorite waltz swoon aimlessly about the ball-room without her, and knew no regret. Adrian watched her slim, radiant young beauty with satisfaction.

"Mr. Blair," said Angelica, settling her pretty muslin ruffles about her, "was there ever a time when you had to keep thoughts and feelings to yourself, for fear that people would not be able to understand you, and would think you queer?"

Angelica looked so appealingly conscious of having said something out of the ordinary that Adrian hadn't the heart to disappoint her.

"Often," he said, gravely.

"Well," said Angelica, unconsciously tilting her head so that her profile was distracting against the green, "I've done that every day since I have seen you. And I have a little list of things

in my head that I wanted to talk to you about. I'm sure they are things that you, too, must have thought about."

"Yes," said Adrian, "tell me whatever you choose."

Angelica began. She had a thousand pretty graces when she talked, and Adrian watched them all in particular, and kept track of what she was saying in general. She told him how devotedly she loved her family, though none of them understood how different she was; she did not say "superior," but she avoided the word and produced the inference so prettily that Adrian was charmed. She told him how she dreaded her life, with its certain round of empty gaieties, and how she longed to help other people to see things as she saw them; and she shut her eyes so prettily when she laughed that Adrian was enchanted.

"She would be perfect if only she would talk personalities, and keep off the subject of the welkin," Adrian told himself, and forthwith experimented with:

"It is wonderful to have met you! How good that we did not miss each other—you and I!"

To which Angelica, looking at him, wide-eyed as a child, replied, simply:

"Yes, indeed. Miss Spreckles, my governess, was the only other one I ever talked with like this. And you can imagine how I have missed her, and longed for some one like her."

This inability of his to bring about the personal equation puzzled Adrian not a little. It had never been so before. All the other little disciples, one by one, had ceased to search for truth, and had invariably proved appreciative audiences to his exquisite and really instructive love-making. To have been in love with Adrian was like having had a course in some special, select school of the spirit, and one came from it attuned to various harmonies, and alive to certain gracious aspects of life which were before unrevealed. So invariably did Adrian avoid any jarring

note, that almost no woman had ever been permanently unhappy because she had lost him; but there were numberless women who carried his image in a sort of special and, as it were, pretty, artificial floral heart, papered with fairy love-letters, all poetry and stars. Given a collection of these love-letters without their superscriptions, Adrian could not honestly have told them apart. But he had nothing with which to reproach himself. He was a perfect lover. His love-making was a delicate science of his own. He gave, for the time, as much as he won, and he cheerfully became a gracious memory. Some women like to have a little tender, sighing *arrière pensée* to their final, great love—just a fringe of shadow ready for use on twilights, when the final great love is away from home. Adrian was this *arrière pensée* in a score of respected households, and no one was the wiser, or the more miserable, or in the least harmed thereby. It must be remembered that he was in the late thirties, and that he had a certain luminous beauty.

Therefore, Adrian was a bit piqued at Angelica's persistently regarding him as the flower of spiritual confidants, and not once in the light of a possible lover. Instinctively, he attributed this to the conventional surroundings in which they had always met. Something that Angelica herself said led him to suggest what he hoped would be a way out.

"A ball-room must be so stupid," sighed Angelica, as they left the conservatory, "beside a party in a studio!"

"I've been longing," said Adrian, promptly, "to ask your mother and you to come to my studio for tea. Do you think that it would be possible?"

"Oh, yes," said Angelica, joyously; "mother loves to be blamed for being broad, and she thinks studio teas are improper; so she always goes—to the right studios—whenever we're asked, which isn't often. Mother loves to do proper things improper, and then do them. Indeed, we'll come."

"Then I'll ask her for Wednesday, if

that is well," said Adrian. "I dare not set the time nearer, for fear of losing you both."

Adrian out of his studio was like Bacchus sober. Adrian in his studio wore black-velvet knickerbockers and a little old worn black-velvet smoking-jacket, and he was curiously unobtrusive, though he neglected nothing.

Mrs. Marbury and Angelica came early on Wednesday, and Adrian saw to it that Angelica's mother was promptly absorbed by a competent author whom Adrian had corraled for the purpose. Then he placed Angelica in a great chair by the fireplace, under a wonderful marble of Venus crucified. And he brought her tea, and fruit preserves prepared in Araby by the heat of the sun alone; and her serviette was silver tissue woven by one loom in south Japan—both rapturous offerings of devotees. Faintly fragrant wood burned on the hearth. Adrian scorned incense, but this wood was a perfumed juniper imported specially for him by a third devotee. On a table by Angelica's side were scattered amulets, scarabs, slim little daggers of tempered steel, cubes of jade, and a tray of uncut, semi-precious stones—some of which possessions and extravagances explained why Adrian was sometimes hungry—and possibly justified his hunger.

"Oh," said Angelica, "think of our house, padded with upholstery and positively grinning with gilt! Yet it isn't bad of its sort—but this! Oh, how you must read and dream and work in this beautiful place!"

Adrian had thrown himself along a honey-colored skin, marked like a plume. He looked up at her.

"It would be," he said, slowly, "a wonderful place for two who loved each other."

Angelica was silent.

"For two," he went on, "who cared more for the life that could be led here together, with books and gems and a picture or two, than for all that they shut outside."

Angelica was still silent. Adrian waited, as one who has struck a harp

waits for its vibration to die away. For the first time, Angelica looked at him with the shyness that was not a part of her old childish shyness. Then, "I have a friend," he added, deliberately, "who is to be married this month. I may give the studio up to him for a time."

For, having introduced a personality and being sure of its effect, Adrian always promptly disclaimed it, and so reestablished confidence. Angelica looked about her, dreamily.

"How perfect!" she said.

"Yes," said Adrian, slowly, "for them. But I seem always," he added, with a little sigh, "just shut out of things."

He felt Angelica's eyes on his face.

"Music is one," he explained, tranquilly, with a glance at Sydney Fairfield's harp in the corner. "I am shut away from music. It is a great sorrow to me. But that, at least," he added, after a pause, "is my own fault."

Angelica bent forward in the great chair. "And are not the other things?" she asked, softly.

Adrian met her eyes steadily. "No," he said, with delicate emphasis, "you know that."

Then Angelica blushed. "But," she said, tremulously, "may they be within your power to—"

"Alas," said Adrian, lightly, "you remind me of a hope held out to me by the dealer in antiques and the believer in signs who once sold me that villainous dagger there on the wall."

Thereupon followed a quarter of an hour of Adrian at his humorous, tender, impersonal best, and when he rose, declaring that he dare monopolize her no longer, he was radiant. For, since Angelica's blush and tremulous question about the things that might be within his power, he no longer feared the reintroduction of Miss Spreckles, the late governess, into the equation. Angelica was awake.

"Ah, do something for me!" he pleaded. "Pour some tea for your mother. Is it very silly of me to want to remember you so—at my table?"

III

WHEN his other guests were gone, Adrian and the competent author sat for a little while over their cigars.

"Nice little girl—Angelica Marbury," said the author, reflectively.

Adrian listened.

"When a man gets to be my age," went on the author, "he is past looking for the sort of woman who understands him. He doesn't care what her decisions about life are. He wants her to be able to talk prettily, and whether he agrees with her or not doesn't in the least figure, so long as she has little mannerisms that it delights him to watch. What do you think?"

"I think," said Adrian, frankly, lighting a cigarette, "that it would be hardly worth while to be your age—since you mention it."

"Why, don't you agree with me?" asked the author, irritably. He was sixty, and had not been lionized.

"Yes," said Adrian, "but I hope not to, in a few years."

"Nonsense," said the author; "I admire women tremendously. I admire them enough to see that they are greater than any of the little fool ideas they have."

Then he went home, and Adrian sat for an hour and thought about Angelica.

Why shouldn't he marry her, after all? he wondered. Otherwise, some one of the men in her set with polo and ping-pong interests, could eventually hold her and make her happy and quite forgetful that she had ever longed for a different life. He also knew that, if she were to marry him, there was little hope that she could ever grow into his inner life—the life that cared more for the harmonies of his work and for all subtleties than for anything life with Angelica could bring him. There was, too, very little hope that she would cease to try to talk of things which she did not understand, and there was almost the certainty that she never would understand any better than she did now.

From her trite statements about her

longing for "something better and higher than the others have," Adrian revolted continually. She was like a girl graduate's essay, every paragraph of which began with "Let us," and ended with a sentence that she had heard some one else say. He shuddered to see himself, at fifty, with a wife who wore distractingly pretty gowns and had enchanting manners, and who used both for the purpose of cornering certain grave, wise, sincere and respected friends of his, and pouring into their ears convictions concerning aspirations and higher viewpoints—and even concerning beauty, of which they well knew that she had no conception beyond melodies and chiffons. On the other hand, Angelica had a charm which haunted Adrian. Always before he had loved women for their partial understanding of what he understood, for their conquerable aloofness of manner, or even for the beauty of their hands.

"But Angelica is different," he found himself saying, and smiled indulgently and knew the truth. In the late thirties he was in love—like a boy. The situation flattered him. He was not, then, so world-weary as he thought. Was one ever so world-weary as one thought? he wondered.

Adrian, it was true, had nothing in the world but debts in the hands of indulgent creditors. But that did not once occur to him as a reason for not marrying. He was going to do so much when his pictures once began to sell that it never occurred to him that he had not already done it. To do him justice, it also never occurred to him that Angelica's father's wealth was a reason for marrying Angelica. There had been the rich Miss Older—and her poetry was very good, too—but he had not married her.

Meanwhile, Angelica's course was easy; for falling in love is not hard when one is twenty, and the man has a certain luminous beauty. It was all perfectly clear in Angelica's mind. She had found some one who "understood." What more was there to say?

Mrs. Marbury found a great deal to say.

"What do you mean by saying that he understands?" she asked, irritably. "Understands what, Angelica?"

"Oh, life and beauty and what is real," answered Angelica, dreamily. She was looking out the carriage-window, hoping to see Adrian on the street.

Mrs. Marbury terrified her little Pommeranian by her sudden gesture.

"Real!" she said. "He hasn't an idea of anything real. He lives in the clouds, and what you are thinking of I am sure I don't know. You shall never marry him, Angelica, and I forbid you to see him again."

Angelica only continued to smile dreamily. This alarmed her mother, because she feared that it but thinly disguised determination.

"Why can't you marry Rossiter Peabody?" Mrs. Marbury asked, more calmly. "He cares for art, if that is what you want. He never speaks at the opera—although I think that is an affectation in any one."

Angelica turned.

"Rossiter Peabody, mama!" she said. "I asked Rossiter Peabody if he had ever heard a nightingale, and he said yes, once by moonlight on the Bosphorus; but it was before he began his bird-study, so that it didn't impress him very distinctly. Do you think I could marry him?"

"But, Angelica," protested Mrs. Marbury, distractedly, "he is a gentleman. He is worth millions. Think of his family! And he is such good form! What do you mean by this prattle of nightingales?"

Angelica smiled. "Mr. Blair heard him say it," she said, "and we looked at each other. I wouldn't have all Rossiter Peabody's millions in exchange for that moment. Mr. Blair does so understand!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mrs. Marbury, "don't let me hear you say that word again! For the last time, I ask you what you mean by it? Understand what?"

"Life," said Angelica, "and beauty and what is real."

Whereat it would all be argued over again.

Six weeks after he met her, Adrian had made up his mind to win Angelica. When he sat by his fireside in his studio he missed her, and he wanted her in the oak chair opposite. That decided the matter.

Driving up Broadway one rainy Saturday afternoon, Adrian looked through the spattered window of his hansom at Mrs. Marbury entering the opera-house for the *matinée* of "*Tristan*." Before she had reached her box he was half-way to her home.

When his card came up, Angelica was hard at work on a book which he had given her to read, and she came down at once, her finger in its pages.

"I expect mama back at any moment," Angelica said, unblushingly. "Can't you possibly wait for her?"

Adrian could. He took the book gently from her, and read to her, cunningly selecting passages to minister alike to the heart of Angelica and the needs of the moment. It was a book of fragments—*idylls* and legends of Tuscany, bits of Provençal poetry, traditions of how some great painter, who was most of all a lover, came to paint some strange, radiant old picture. Adrian, at the tips of whose fingers lay all the history of beauty, in color and word and story, had only to select an ancient book, or to tell the romance of some old gem, and little Angelica was all blind enthusiasm. Adrian, who knew whither it all tended, sometimes marveled at the certainty that Angelica did not.

Adrian read aloud a bit from a Japanese *pastel*.

"Early in the morning," he read, "this strange company of silent peasants, and silent women, and silent lovers and poets, all journey down the white road to the pond where the lotus blooms. Scarce four o'clock it is when these pilgrimages are made, and the little company, strangers to one another, move out along the highway to the lotus-water. And always they

are silent. For so old is Japan that it has all been said.'"

There was something about the mention of Japan in a like circumstance, that always put Adrian at his best. There is no more fruitful topic of romance. The early twilight was in the room. Mrs. Marbury was chattering through the last act of "Tristan." Adrian stretched out his hand. And before the curtain fell, and Mrs. Marbury had pretended to wipe her eyes with enchanting furtiveness, Angelica was saying:

"Oh, but do you think I am wise enough, and sympathetic enough to be your wife, Adrian?"

And Adrian, noting only the wonder of her eyes in the firelight, answered:

"Yes, sweetheart."

Afterward, they had to reckon with Mrs. Marbury, who chattered through her own tragedy just as she had through that of the lovers of Brittany, and with quite as pathetically little effect. But that proved to be only an interlude, and may be passed over in silence.

IV

Two years later, Adrian went up the stairs to his studio late one afternoon, and had his latch-key out before the babel of voices within reminded him that it was Angelica's "at home" day. She drove down once a week in her smart coupé, and dispensed tea to her friends and those of his who cared to drop in. To-day the studio was full, and the air was all warm yellow light and sweet odor and soft vowels. Adrian made his way to his wife's side to greet her, and then he joined a group near her.

He saw in one corner Mrs. Marbury and a number of fashionable women, who were saying, in forty vagrant ways, that his last picture was perfect. He saw half-a-dozen of his own artist friends and their friends, and a number of people whom he did not know. Two exquisitely pretty débutantes were pouring tea.

"How safe I must now be consid-

ered!" thought Adrian, in whimsical dismay.

Then his eye wandered to the group of which his wife was the centre. There was Sir Philip Masterson, the English portrait-painter and man of letters; there was Judge Patton, bending his gray head to listen; there were Darley and Nordhaus, one a noted scientist, the other a successful man of affairs, and coming toward them was Senator Eskridge. Angelica herself was serving punch now, turning from one to another with words which, whatever they were, were accompanied by a distractingly pretty manner. They all listened and laughed and answered, and finally drew together to hear something that she was telling. Adrian moved nearer to listen, too.

Angelica put back a straying yellow curl, and her little hand flashed back to the punch-ladle.

"And then," she said, "what do you think I advised this famous actress, with ten successful years back of her and the world before her, and everything besides at her feet? 'If you are unhappy,' I said, 'go and rent a cottage in the country, and adopt the property baby you have told me about.' And she actually did, and she has refused an offer to star! What do you think of that?"

"Brava, each!" cried the scientist. "I hardly know which deserves the more credit."

"But what of her career?" asked Sir Philip Masterson. "And, what is more important, what of the probable career of the property baby?"

Angelica opened her eyes.

"But she never has found her career till now, don't you see?" she cried; "and, as to the property baby—why, she loves it! What more do you ask?"

"Very well," said Judge Patton; "but if I am not mistaken, the lady's husband——"

"Oh!" cried Angelica, in fine scorn; "he is lecturing on 'Life Within Life,' and his audiences are said to go wild with enthusiasm."

"And you don't approve?" asked Sir Philip, in amusement.

"Thoroughly," said Angelica. "I approve of his doing anything that frees his wife from the responsibility of him."

"But you don't approve of his career—as a career?" persisted Sir Philip.

Angelica's reply was interrupted by Rhoda Denton, one of the *débutantes*.

"Oh, Mrs. Blair," she cried, the sugar-tongs suspended, "surely there can be nothing in the world so wonderful as this Monsieur Froissart's lecture 'mornings.' I only heard him twice in London—but, oh, he was dressed in white samite—it's only velvet, you know, but doesn't it sound musical?—and the stage was all in white, and he spoke for two hours on finding beauty in unexpected places. And he taught us to see the purples in roofs of houses when they were wet."

Angelica laughed—a bubbling, merry, girlish laugh that warmed Adrian's heart.

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" she said, "if you could only see his wife on the porch of that Westchester cottage, with the property baby in her arms! Purple roofs, indeed!"

Angelica's "at home" was a particular success that day, and it was late before every one had gone. When the door closed on the competent author, ushering out the two *débutantes* and their mothers, Angelica turned, and caught Adrian's hand.

"Come here," she said, "I've taken a terrible risk—but come here."

She drew him across the room to the little door of his old bed-chamber and sanctum, used now only when Adrian "put up" some friend there. But he saw that it was lighted, and when Angelica opened the door, Celeste stood by the window, and Angelica herself was bending over a fluff of perturbed lace on the bed.

"I couldn't help it, I couldn't help it, Adrian!" she cried, "and he's been so good. He didn't cry once, did he, Celeste? I expected him to break up the tea-party. But oh, Adrian, he

cried so when I tried to leave him at home that I couldn't help it!"

She gathered up the lace in her arms, and carried it to the fire, and sat in the big oak chair. A little pink fist was thrust up, and caressed her face, and she laid it against her lips.

"Adrian," cried Angelica, "couldn't we have dinner here in the studio, and send baby home with Celeste when he goes to sleep?"

"Dine alone with my wife in my studio?" said Adrian. "Scandalous and delightful!"

When he came back from giving the orders, Adrian wandered about the room, setting things to rights. Any number of choice little bits had been added to the studio, and he smiled as he remembered some of that day's comments upon them. He turned an exquisite hour-glass, set in tiny Ionic pillars wound with carved roses. The silver sands ran noiselessly, and he held it for a moment.

"Did you hear Rhoda Denton say," he asked, with an amused laugh, "that she could marry any man who told time by an hour-glass?"

"Oh, she!" cried Angelica. "Why, Adrian, isn't she impossible? I tried to talk with her about awnings this afternoon, and she whipped me into some little matter about the infinite before I could declare for blue stripes instead of red."

"She's pretty intense," admitted Adrian; "I'm told——"

"Adrian!" called Angelica, suddenly.

"Yes, dear," he said, holding the hour-glass to the firelight.

"Come here," she begged.

He went to her, and knelt on the fur before the fire, and put his arm about her and the lace.

"Adrian," said Angelica, "why did you marry me?"

"Because I loved you," said Adrian, promptly.

"Do you love me as much now?" she asked; and Adrian knew that she was, for some reason, deeply in earnest, or her humor would have revolted.

"A thousand times more," he said, truthfully. "Why, dear?"

"Because, Adrian," she said, slowly, "I don't see how that can be true. Don't you know that—then—when we were married, I was like Rhoda Denton and the rest—just like them, only worse? And I thought that was why—I actually thought that was why you loved me! And now——"

Adrian waited, smiling. He had seen her nature ripen and sweeten and become trained, and surrender to every sweet influence, but he had not expected her to become self-conscious—yet.

"Now," she finished, "I'm not a bit like that. I hope I'm not. But the curious part is that I love all the beautiful things in the world a thousand times more than I did then. And yet to say so, even to you, seems, somehow, an affectation."

Adrian drew her closer to him.

"I know, dear," she said. And in that moment Adrian, himself grown in simple sincerity, loved her as he had never loved her before. And she

knew, with a glad little thrill, as she turned and met his eyes, that they had never been so near as at that moment. They were silent a little while. Then Angelica moved with a happy little breath.

"How much greater everything like this is," she said, vaguely, "than everything like that."

The man was outside with a tray laden with savory, smoking dishes. As he arranged them, Adrian, who had opened the door for him, turned and looked at the softly lighted room, and at his wife's fair head bending over the child. A sudden glorious sense of what he had risked and what he had won swept through his pulses. He looked up involuntarily at the marble of the crucified Venus, and she seemed to smile at him from her cross. Verily, the Venus of his wooing was crucified for his own redemption—and Angelica's.

"Is everything right, sir?" asked the man, softly.

"Yes," cried Adrian, "everything is right!"



THE MASCULINE VIEW

"SHE'S really a lovely girl," he said,
 "A blonde, and extremely fair,
 With a gracefully small and classic head."
 "Indeed? And what did she wear?"

"Her eyes—you know those eyes like mist,
 Just the color of skies, at dawn,
 With lashes the longest, silkiest—"
 "Yes—yes, but, what had she on?"

"I liked her manner. Its gentle charm
 Suggested a soul at rest;
 And then—her smile was so sweet and warm—"
 "Good gracious! How was she *dressed*?"

She must have worn *some* sort of a gown?"
 "Why—yes—that is certainly clear;
 But I did not see it, I frankly own—
 I saw only *her*, my dear!"

MADLINE BRIDGES.

RICORDATEVI DI ME!

(TERZA RIMA)

IF ever thou shouldst cease to think of me
 With love, and turn thy soul's sweet warmth to ice—
 (Stop not my mouth with kisses! Change may be,
 As all do know who take for their device
 A bleeding heart!) If any change should seal
 To me the gates of uttermost Paradise,
 And I should darkling fare, with no repeal,
 In company of them, that, love-forsaken,
 Before cold shrines and at dead altars kneel—
 Remember this: I bade thy heart awaken;
 Here in this hand it lay a prisoner!
 Thy first wild love-kiss from my lips was taken,
 And with my breath thy first sighs mingled were!
 Remember this—I loved thee well and long,
 Thou haven to me, a time-worn wanderer!
 Then, though my voice be drowned in that clear song
 Of thy new love, and I forgotten be
 Or all-despised, think thou in my wrong
 Some good there was, some truth akin with thee,
 Some light half-seen, since I could tune a soul
 Virgin as thine to perfect harmony,
 And crown thy brow with Love's pure aureole!

GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND.



NO ESCAPE

TOWNSEND—If his wife caught him kissing the maid, why didn't he tell
 her he did it by mistake?
BARKER—He couldn't very well. You see, he never kisses his wife.



IDEAL

“DOES Bramble get along well with his wife?”
 “Splendidly. Why, he tells me he would scarcely know that he was
 married.”

THE FOG OF DREAMS

By Theodosia Garrison

JULES OUBERT left his car at Fifty-ninth street, and walked into the Park. He was in a mood which caused him to go briskly, with his head well in the air, and to carry his five feet five inches with the air of a grenadier.

The world was going well with Jules. This morning the head of the large importing-house where he was employed had sent to his desk a note, the contents of which informed him that his salary had been increased some few dollars a month. Also, his mother that morning had devoutly thanked God and the Virgin that her rheumatism was mending—a fact, in the little Frenchman's estimation, in no wise below the first in importance.

The Spring had come early to New York. This May afternoon held a touch of Midsummer in its breath. Jules brought an artistic eye to bear upon the newly blossomed trees and the virginal stretches where the last sunbeams were fading.

There seemed a gala air astir. The pretty women in the open carriages seemed gayer; the various housemaids in his path prettier; the rollicking babies more delightful than usual. Jules's roseate mood colored the world.

He came presently to an empty bench in a more secluded corner than any he had passed, and, after a glance at his watch, settled himself comfortably, and drew his newspaper from his pocket.

His mother would not expect him for a half-hour yet. It would be pleasanter to read here than in the little East Side flat, albeit he gloried in its proprietorship. If he were late, he

would carry home a bottle of the red wine his mother loved, as a peace-offering, and have up Miss Hershel, the little milliner, from the flat below, to share it and make a *festa* with them.

He was so engrossed in his paper that he failed to see the girl who came wearily up the path, and dropped in the end seat of the bench he occupied.

She had walked softly indeed, with the dragging step of very exhaustion. It seemed to her that every city block she had traversed that day had been so many miles—the distance from one stage-door to another incalculable. She could not have told what instinct, after her last disappointment, had set her feet in the direction of the Park—a vague idea that homeless people were allowed to sleep on the benches there, a nostalgia for the familiar sight of trees and green; principally, perhaps, because one place was as good as another, and one must keep walking and not stand still.

She was scarcely aware, in her dazed condition, of the spruce little man beside her. The first intimation he had of her presence was the soft huddle of her unconscious body against his shoulder.

He sprang to his feet with an exclamation, and stood a moment staring at her. She lay with her head against the iron arm of the bench; a few strands of blond hair fell across her face, the pallor of which struck a terror to Jules's soul.

He raised her head until it rested with some degree of comfort on the back of the seat, and looked about him helplessly. There was no one in sight. A belated carriage or two went swiftly

by on the drive below. A sound of children's voices came from a distance.

When his momentary bewilderment passed, the little Frenchman acted quickly. There was a drinking-fountain playing near. He dipped his handkerchief into the water, and passed it gently over the girl's pretty, pallid face.

She had scarcely swooned. The sight of her opening eyes and a slight return of color reassured him.

"You are ill, mademoiselle!" he cried. "Pardon if I have taken a liberty, but surely you are ill."

She straightened her grotesque hat, and patted her blond pompadour in shape before she answered.

"I'm not sick," she said; "I'm tired, that's all. I guess I just lost myself for a minute. I've been walking since morning." She leaned back on the seat as she spoke. "I'm all right now," she added.

There was a note of dismissal in her tone that a less chivalrous man might have welcomed, but Jules hesitated.

"But you are not well enough to be left to yourself," he insisted. "If you will allow me, I would consider it a great honor to be permitted to escort you to your home."

The girl's eyes were blue, a childlike, pathetic blue that seemed strangely at variance with the sullen lines about her mouth. She raised her eyes now, distrust and a certain desperate alarm in their depths; but something in the man's expression forced her confidence.

"I haven't got any home," she said; "not around here, at any rate. I was put out this morning because I owed three weeks' board. The landlady is an awful woman. She kept my trunk. It's just as well—I wouldn't have known what to do with it."

Jules stared at her in amazement. The novelty of his situation appalled him. There was no appeal in the girl's face, no apology; she simply stated a fact baldly, as she might speak to herself. He staggered a moment under the responsibility, but he never wavered from its acceptance.

Little Jules Oubert at this moment,

in his well-worn, shabby-genteel coat, knew, perhaps, no less generosity than that of a knight in armor who rides to the aid of a damsel in distress.

He threw a hasty look about him; the shadows were deepening; it was well over his dinner hour; the evening air was chill, and the girl wore no wrap. He saw her shiver even as he spoke.

"Is there no place where you can go?" he said. "No friends? What is it you intend to do, mademoiselle?"

"I don't know," she said, dully. "I can't go back to the boarding-house, I know that. I can stay here, I suppose."

"But to-night? To-morrow?"

"I don't know," she repeated.

She was quite sincere. She truly did not know. She had reached a state where she was no longer capable of resisting circumstances. She was powerless, and they might do as they pleased with her helplessness.

Jules looked at her again, at the tawdry hat, at the cheap finery of her dress, at her gloves worn through at the finger ends; last, at the pretty, sullen face that met his own with no appeal, with no hope of possibilities in the somber eyes, and his hesitation vanished.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "I do not quite understand, but I know one thing; I cannot leave you here alone. It is a thing no gentleman would consider. My mother and I have a small home not far from here. I beg of you to accompany me there—for the night, at least. You shall talk to my mother, to me, if you will, and all, no doubt, will be right. I beg of you, mademoiselle."

She looked at him, surprise breaking through her apathy.

"Does your mother keep a boarding-house? Do you suppose she'd trust me a while? I could pay her in time. I'm apt to be sent for any day. You see," she explained, "I'm an actress; that is, I'm going to be. I came from home to be one. I suppose I came at a bad time. Every theatre seems to have all the places filled, but every

manager I've seen has taken my name and address. If I'd had a little more money, it would have been all right. Do you suppose your mother would trust me?"

Suddenly, her voice broke; her mouth trembled like an abused child's. "I haven't had a thing to eat to-day," she said, "not a thing."

"*Mon Dieu!*" the little Frenchman cried. "But this is terrible, atrocious! I beg you will accompany me at once."

His eagerness seemed to fill her with a dumb wonder. She rose to her feet, straightening her rumpled dress as she did so.

"Oh, I'll come," she said. "You're sure your mother will trust me?"

"She will be charmed, mademoiselle," said Oubert, gallantly. It could be explained to her later, he assured himself, with a fine courtesy, that she came not as his mother's lodger, but as her guest.

The little milliner from the ground floor was not invited that night to make festival with her neighbors above. Instead, she had spent an evening with a mind rioting in a curiosity that threatened to lead her to the very door of the Oubert apartment. She had been looking from her window above the box of blooming geraniums, and had beheld Jules and his companion as they came up the long steps, with, perhaps, the same stare of amazement as that with which old Madame Oubert had regarded them from her own window.

That morning she had watched him depart alone. Little Miss Hershel's curiosity was seething, but she forced herself to thread her needle calmly and begin the picturesque occupation of sewing blue corn-flowers on a crimson hat.

She sewed furiously as she heard Madame Oubert's door open, and presently recognized that lady's limping step.

"Come in," called Miss Hershel, before the expected rap had fallen on the door.

Madame Oubert found an interested

listener to her narrative. She told the story of Jules's meeting with her guest, dramatically, much as her son had told it to her.

"He has a heart of gold, my Jules," she concluded.

"Um!" commented Miss Hershel. "And what did you say her name was?"

"Her name is Pratt, Miss Lizzie Pratt. That is one name. When she goes on the stage, she says, she has another—I could not understand what. It was very long and difficult."

"Oh, an actress!" said Miss Hershel. "She looked to me like a type-writer. Where does she act?"

"As yet, nowhere," said Madame Oubert. "But any time, she says, she is expecting to be sent for. She lived in a town called Ver-mont. It was so she told Jules. It was there she acted, and sang in the church, and every one told her that she must come to a place that was larger, where others could hear; that she had what she called 'a career,' and when she came—*voilà!*—the places were filled, she must wait. And in the house where she stayed they would not believe, and because she had no money, they made her go. Oh, beasts without souls! so Jules said."

Miss Hershel bit off her thread sharply. "If she hasn't any money, why doesn't she go home?"

"It is the pride," explained Madame Oubert. "She will not go until she has what she says 'succeeded.' She has no parents to send for her, only an aunt who was not pleased that she went away."

"And, in the meantime, I suppose she is to stay with you," said Miss Hershel, the corn-flowers quivering under the thrusts of her needle.

"Where else?" said the old woman, simply. "'Oh, *ma mère*,' said Jules, 'Providence it was that she came to me as she did. She, so young, so beautiful, to be alone and friendless in this great city!' He has a heart of gold, my son! But with this talk I forget my errand. It is that you must come and make a little feast with us to-night. My son's employers at last begin to

understand his worth." She nodded mysteriously at Miss Hershel, with the air of one who hinted at untold wealth. "It would not be well for our good friend below not to rejoice with us," so Jules said. You will come?"

The little milliner's sallow face flushed. "Why, of course, I'll come, Madame Oubert," she said.

She followed her guest to the door with a last question on her lips. "Where does she — Miss Pratt—sleep? There's that little back room here——"

Madame Oubert interrupted her courteously. "You are most kind, but my son has arranged that. She has his room. He is sleeping on the sofa. He assures me that it is most comfortable."

Left to herself, Miss Hershel pursed her lips and shrugged her shoulders. The action in some way seemed to counteract a certain strange soreness of spirit. "That heart of gold is very good, no doubt," she meditated, "but the man can be imposed upon like a child. They're just two innocents, Jules and his mother, and, if that young woman up-stairs isn't all she should be, she'll hear from Martha Hershel."

If Miss Hershel had gone up-stairs this evening in an aggressive and suspicious mood, her meeting with Miss Pratt had, at least, served to soften it. The girl was no adventuress. That her story was true was obvious. She lacked the hall-mark of the impostor, and she showed no inclination whatever to ingratiate herself; she behaved, in fact, as the boarder she believed herself to be would have acted.

Her trunk had arrived that afternoon, a fact which had called for no small time and effort on Jules's part, and its appearance had given her courage to discuss money matters with Madame Oubert. That lady, having been well and thoroughly posted by her son, had been delightfully vague; to one acquainted with the customary manoeuvres of landladies, surprisingly so. Miss Pratt was at liberty to stay until she took her position, when it would be time enough to discuss money affairs.

"Well, it won't be long," the girl said.

She looked in the glass as she spoke, and pulled her pompadour closer to her eyebrows. "I'm apt to be sent for any time. Mr. Oubert said he'd write to the post-office about my letters."

She had spent most of the day arranging the contents of her trunk. The few gowns she hung in the tiny wardrobe, scrupulously prepared for her that morning by her host. One, a white cheese-cloth affair with a border of gold, she offered to Madame Oubert's inspection.

"It's a Juliet costume. We had it at the schoolhouse last Winter. Everybody said it was grand. The elocution teacher was Romeo. I made this myself. Pretty, isn't it?"

She fingered the folds caressingly as she hung it up.

There were some small treasures in her trunk as well; some wood and moss monstrosities, and a pincushion in the form of a shoe with, "From Niagara Falls," in pink beads on its side. She hesitated a moment before she placed it on the little wash-stand.

"A present from a friend," she explained, guardedly, to Madame Oubert.

She was dressed by the time Martha Hershel's black silk rustled up the stairway. Jules's brisk step, light and alert, came just behind it. The little dining-room presently exhaled an air of festivity and hospitality. Madame Oubert had been a famous cook in her day. She was not averse to compliments now, for all she parried and deprecated.

Miss Hershel, between her brisk sentences, studied the girl opposite. Miss Pratt spoke very little; she had been emphatic only once, when she declined the red wine, much in the manner of one who pushes aside a poisoned potion.

Miss Hershel looked from her to Jules. The little Frenchman was smoking a cigarette, and regarding the girl dreamily through its smoke. In his heart, he was saying to himself that the romance he had sought for so long had come to him. He, Jules Oubert,

by the grace of God, had been able to do a service to this wonderful, golden-haired girl. Oh, she was very beautiful! And an artiste! One could tell she was an artiste from the very way her hair was arranged—not too neat, not too precise. It was wonderful that such an event should have come into his life. He was supremely happy and grateful. Miss Pratt and Miss Hershel were talking. He caught the last of their conversation.

"Yes, I spoke pieces when I was only a child. Everybody said I had a wonderful memory. I read a thing only three or four times, and I knew it by heart. 'The Polish Boy,' now, I had that in two lessons. Have you ever heard it? It's a grand recitation. Why, yes, I'll say it if you like. I don't mind. It's a long time since I did it, though. I hope I don't forget it."

She took the centre of the room with an assurance pathetically sublime. One could see that this thing was food to her. Her eyes, as they glanced at her audience, wore the look of the leading lady who surveys an appreciative house.

The instructions of the village elocutionist had evidently fallen upon fertile soil. Miss Pratt made up in gesture what she lacked in enunciation, and conscientiously gave sound the preference to sense.

She fell upon the long-suffering "Polish Boy" with the fury of the avenger on his victim. "Whence come those shrieks so wild and shrill?" she demanded—a question which threw Madame Oubert into a state of alarmed bewilderment, copiously punctuated by whispered "*Mon Dieu*," as the recitation proceeded.

Miss Pratt sat down, warm, but triumphant. If she was used to hear the walls of her native schoolhouse ring with applause, she scarcely missed it here.

Jules, in a state of rapturous excitement, brought all the adjectives of his vocabulary to do her homage. He appealed to his mother and Miss Hershel in turn. Was not Miss Pratt

wonderful, sublime? An artiste! A marvel! A Bernhardt!

Madame Oubert, who had evidently regarded the recitation as a personal narration, followed, bewildered, but voluble, in his wake.

Miss Hershel went to her bed that night with the air of one conquered, but not convinced. So far as the girl's story was concerned, all was well. She had no need to stand between the Ouberts and an impostor, but she closed her eyes, nevertheless, with a curious ache at her heart. All night Jules's eyes seemed to look through her dreams to Miss Pratt's face.

II

JULY came to New York like a passing flame that left devastation in its track. The fierce white heat of the day gave place at night to a breathless heaviness that closed about the city like a wall, and sent the tenants of the East Side flats gasping into the open. The city-bred accepted the conditions philosophically, but it seemed sometimes to Elizabeth Pratt, as she picked her way in the streets, among the swarming babies of the neighborhood, or leaned heavily from her bedroom window at night, that she was locked in a place of torment from which no escape was possible.

Then, too, she was sick at heart. Disappointment and discouragement had dealt their blows at her pride without in the least affecting her confidence in her own abilities, and, from trusting the many plausible and busy gentlemen who had promised to remember and send for her, she grew to hate them with the intensity of one barred by them from her just deserts.

In the Autumn, she had been told vaguely, things would be different; there would be many openings, many opportunities. Affairs were at a deadlock through the Summer. Wherefore she was waiting with a sullen patience that made her brave the uncongenial occupation of Miss Hershel's assistant, with a certain resignation.

It was at Miss Hershel's suggestion that this had come about, and, if the little milliner cut down her usual allowance of tea, and went to bed by candle instead of gaslight, the fact of Jules's ecstatic appreciation repaid her. She was repaid in little else, however, beyond the fact of Miss Pratt's society and the knowledge which appeals to the martyr in every woman that she was, by her own act, adding another drop of bitterness to her cup of renunciation. For Jules's infatuation for his guest—guest no longer, since a portion of the three dollars that Miss Hershel bestowed upon her assistant every Saturday went to his mother—was a fact too obvious to be ignored.

Miss Pratt, indeed, appeared to be the only one of the little circle to whom the situation was without interest. She was not adaptable. She lived with the Ouberts without in the least being of them. Their ways, their conversation, their joy of little things amazed her. She regarded them with the critical eye of a tourist in a strange land. She gravitated naturally to Miss Hershel as one nearer her own kind, and to her occasionally imparted those bits of conversation in which two women debarred from confidences may indulge.

They sat in Miss Hershel's workroom this July morning among an unusual confusion of ribbons and artificial flowers. The East Side Printers' Association was giving a picnic the next week, and trade was brisk in consequence. Elizabeth Pratt wound a wreath of pink roses listlessly about a white hat, and held it up for Miss Hershel's inspection.

"Pretty, isn't it?" she ventured. "I once had a hat like that. We went on a picnic to Crow's Point—the Baptist Church picnic it was. It blew off, on the way, right into the bushes by the brook. A little more and I might have lost it. I had an awful time getting it."

"How did you get it?" said Miss Hershel, idly.

There was a moment's silence before the girl answered. "A friend of mine

got it for me with a stick," she said. "He almost ruined his clothes, too. If he'd been such a dude as Mr. Oubert, he would have felt awful, I guess. Mr. Oubert's finicky for a man, isn't he? I suppose all Frenchmen are like that. He changed his necktie three times before we went out in the Park, Sunday."

"I'd put the roses more on the side," said Miss Hershel.

Miss Pratt's hands went on with her work, but her thoughts were evidently elsewhere.

"I guess all foreigners are queer, anyhow. I don't know what they'd think at home to see people drinking wine every night. And they do such silly things! There's Mr. Oubert bringing me a rose every night. You'd think it was a lot, the way he gives it to me. And a whole dozen on Sunday! You'd think, if he was going to spend money on a present, he'd get something useful."

"Like a pincushion from Niagara Falls, perhaps," said Miss Hershel, sharply. "I always thought a present depended on the spirit that went with it."

"I suppose so," said the girl, listlessly. "That cushion is real handsome, though. I've got an ivory brush-and-comb set home, too, in a plush box. It was too big to get in my trunk. The same friend gave it to me."

Suddenly, she rose to her feet, and walked to the open window.

"I've got a headache," she said, unsteadily. "I can't sew any more to-day. It's awful hot, and it's almost six, anyhow, isn't it? I wish it was later. Mr. Oubert's going to take me over to Riverside Drive to-night. We must look funny walking together. I'm head and shoulders taller than he is. Little men are awful comical, anyway, I think. I always want to laugh when I see one."

Miss Hershel's thread snapped. "You don't have to go if you don't want to," she said, shortly.

"Oh, I'd just as soon," said Miss Pratt. "I'm used to it by this time, anyhow."

Presently, she went up-stairs to her

room, passing through the kitchen where Madame Oubert was busy at the gas-stove. The old lady nodded at her kindly, and threw a glance at the clock. Her interest in a love-affair was none the less enjoyable because one of the principals was her own son.

"Jules will be home soon," she smiled, suggestively.

In her room, Elizabeth Pratt went to the mirror, and began to brush out her blond hair. There was a little curl of scorn on her lips.

"That old woman can't talk about anything else in the world but Jules. I should think she'd get tired of it. You'd think he was the finest man in the world. Why, Gus Van Duyné could pick him up with one hand!"

She hesitated a moment at the mirror. Her own eyes dared her. Then she went to the corner that held her trunk, and took a box from its contents.

There were two tintypes in the box; both had been taken on the day of the memorable Baptist picnic. One showed herself in a muslin gown, wearing the rose-crowned hat. She threw this aside, and took up the second, lingering over the inscription on the pink-paper cover before she opened it. "From Gus to Lizzie," she read.

Her eyes grew reminiscent as they rested on the picture itself. It showed a powerful young person, chiefly remarkable for pompadour and scowl. He carried a straw hat in his left hand, and displayed an inch of handkerchief in his breast-pocket. What he lacked in cuffs was more than made up in the elaborate tie he wore, in which the photographer, either by request, or spurred by mere love of the beautiful, had inserted a large and glittering scarf-pin.

The girl looked at the pictured face with an intensity almost breathless. It had been long since she had permitted herself such an indulgence. Young persons in search of a career, she knew instinctively, do well not to look back upon the path they came, but to-night she was disheartened, physically and mentally wearied, more

than ever a stranger in a strange land, sickening for a sight of home.

She was absolutely incapable of analyzing these sensations, of expressing them even to herself. She only knew that the sound of Oubert's footstep in the room beyond and the voice with which he greeted his mother were hateful to her.

There was the customary red rose at her place at the table. She fastened it in the bosom of her dress. There was little conversation. Madame Oubert delivered her usual account of the day's doings, in the voice of one giving a dramatic monologue. Miss Pratt devoted herself to her dinner, and Jules Oubert looked at Miss Pratt.

Of late, there was a radiance about the little man that seemed to throw the very light of love itself. It seemed to him sometimes that he had awakened in the midst of a glorious dream, and, behold, the dream was true! His hopes startled him, but the new joy of existence tingled in his veins like wine. To serve, to worship, to shield, to cheer—he asked little else. The poetry in him had found its romance. The poets on his little bookshelf were stained with his tears. He, Jules Oubert, the humble, the undeserving, was brother to their ecstasies and fears. Beauty had come to him, and brushed him with her garment, and he loved.

Miss Hershel watched them from her window as they came down the steps together. The glint of the girl's hair was bright even in the twilight; there was a red rose at her breast. Jules's eyes were fastened on her face as they walked toward the sunset.

It was a long ride to the river. The sunlight had faded, but the gloom was only like a gray veil between the night and day, pricked sharply by the city's lights, and shadowing the huge outlines of the Palisades, on the opposite shore.

They leaned over the stone wall that edged the Drive, and looked down at the river. A yacht was at anchor near by. Its lights came up one by one as they watched, silently and mys-

teriously. A great building on the Jersey shore, an unseemly pile by day, took on the dignity of a medieval castle with turrets and spires. Jules drew the girl's listless eyes toward it.

"It is the castle of the 'Lady of Shalott,'" he told her, gaily, "and it was from the highest window there that she saw Launcelot going by, and it was down this river she drifted to find him."

Miss Pratt stared at him. "Why, that's a factory over there, isn't it?" she said. "Who did you say lived there?"

Jules smiled, tenderly. Her ignorance, instead of repelling, appealed to him as might a quaintly misspelled word in the letter of a child.

"It is a poem," he told her, "a wonderful poem." He repeated parts of it, appreciatively.

"Oh, a recitation," said Miss Pratt. "I never heard it before. I like them more dramatic. That one now that begins:

"Hold the lantern up higher and tremble
not so,
There's more blood over there than these
drops on the snow;
There's pools of it, lakes of it——"

Do you know it? Perhaps the same man wrote it."

Her eyes, as she spoke, were distant. The river, the Palisades, the swinging lights on the yacht were without their vision. She saw a stage, rows of brilliant lights, eager, expectant faces, and she—Elizabeth Pratt, the cynosure of all eyes, the admired, the applauded—and somewhere in that audience was a tall and pompadoured person who afterward would approach her humbly, and say, "You were right, Lizzie, but now that you *are* an actress, won't you come home with me, anyhow?"

The futility of the dream mocked her. Gus Van Dwyne would never say that, never see her in her triumph. They had quarreled deeply, and he was through with her; had told her so in so many words, not gentle ones, by any means. Oh, why was she so powerless to prove herself, so empty-handed, when the weapon with which

she might strike was so near and yet so inexpressibly far away?

A sudden impulse forced her to turn to Jules. It was the drowning man's instinctive clutch at a straw.

"You could help me if you wanted to," she said. "I'm tired out. I've done all I could. It takes a man to talk to those managers."

"Help you!" he repeated. The girl's hand was on his arm; its touch seemed to force from him the words he had guarded so long. "Help you!" he said again; "I would die for you! You know that."

The tears in the girl's eyes struck through the slight barrier of his self-restraint. In a moment, he had caught her hands in his own. His words seemed to come of themselves, as though Love's self were speaking with his tongue.

The girl stared at him. His emotion annoyed her and repelled as well, but she allowed him to finish. She had caught the paramount note of his rhapsody, and with it a new idea. Van Dwyne had always been jealous. She could try; it wouldn't do any harm, and, even if this little man failed to bring certain conditions to pass, he might help.

Jules trembled as she looked at him. The lights on the Drive seemed to dwindle and die and leave him in darkness, and then, as she spoke, suddenly to flash together in a triumphant and radiant burst of light that might have been the first sun rising over Eden.

Miss Hershel and Madame Oubert, sitting in neighborly fashion in the latter's little parlor, turned as Jules and Miss Pratt crossed the threshold. There was nothing unusual in the girl's face, but, at the sight of Jules's, Miss Hershel's heart seemed to rise in her throat and choke her.

The little man radiated happiness; he seemed to burn with a very flame of joy. He put Miss Pratt's reluctant hand in his mother's before he spoke. He held himself like a conqueror, but his voice was broken with a tenderness

almost feminine. "Oh, my mother," said Jules Oubert, "I have brought thee a daughter."

It was a long time before Elizabeth Pratt gained the seclusion of her bedroom. The latter part of the evening had been chaotic with Madame Oubert's voluble ecstasies and congratulations. Miss Pratt's lips curled as she recalled them.

Miss Hershel, too, she remembered, had remarked that she would trim her wedding-hat for her. "Well, she needn't be in any hurry," thought the girl, rebelliously.

She sat on the edge of her bed with her hands folded in her lap, and looked at them. Jules had kissed them when he said good night. A little shiver of repulsion went through her at the memory.

"I must have been crazy," she thought. "I don't know what possessed me to say I'd marry him. It was bad enough before—but now! He don't act like a man, anyhow. I don't know what he's talking about half the time."

She sat sullenly for a while. Outside her door, she could hear Jules and his mother conversing in the rapid tongue that always, for some unknown reason, roused her slow resentment.

As she listened, she felt that she despised them both. The old feeling that she was being held among strangers against her will, shook her. "No, I won't!" she said to herself, aloud. "I won't wait a minute longer. I've got to hear from him!"

She went to her trunk, and opened it. There was a box there with writing-paper and a pencil. She wrote slowly but persistently. Once she opened the pink-covered tintype, and studied it carefully.

She slept that night with the sealed and directed envelope under her pillow. In the morning, before she went to Miss Hershel's, she posted it.

The two women sewed that day in almost absolute silence. Martha Hershel cut and stitched with the spirit that might have kept her ancestors dumb under torture, and a philosophy

that kept her fingers from overmuch trembling when she threaded her needle.

She stole a curious glance now and again at her assistant's countenance. Could the girl be really fond of Jules, after all? There was a new expression on her face; a nervous, recurring flush on her cheek; a look almost of expectancy in her ordinarily dull eyes. She seemed working in a dream.

The little milliner welcomed Madame Oubert's presence when that good lady limped in and conversed shrilly for the greater part of the afternoon.

The endless stories of Jules's virtues never palled upon her. Miss Pratt, having heard them many times, might be pardoned if this day she failed to hear them at all.

She was following her letter to its destination. She could see it being received, opened, read, and then—one day, two days, before she could expect to hear.

She herself scarcely knew what she hoped Van Duyne's answer might be. She only knew that the present condition of things was insufferable, and she was casting about blindly for relief.

At the end of the week, Miss Pratt's nerves were strained to the breaking point; her being seemed only a thing keyed and responsive to the postman's whistle; her eyes made only that they might be on the alert for the sight of the gray uniform in the street. Outwardly, she seemed as impassive as usual. Jules, watching her, told himself that the girl had taken on a new beauty, an exquisite dignity.

The little man prayed humbly from the bottom of his heart that he might be worthy of the great joy that had come to him. His very worship of her made him diffident; to touch her hand, to lift it sometimes to his lips, to invent a hundred little services for her, these things were ecstasy.

But his dreams were bolder. He walked in them all day long as one might in a rose-colored fog. And at night, in the little sitting-room with Madame Oubert obligingly napping in

her chair, he told them to her. The little man poured out his soul at Elizabeth Pratt's feet, and she heard, perhaps, one word in ten, and comprehended none at all.

To Jules, her silence meant appreciation of the most delicate kind. "Mate of my soul, but how you understand!" he whispered to himself.

The postman had come and gone this morning, and there was no letter for Miss Pratt. The girl watched him from Miss Hershel's window as he went down the street. The bit of sewing she held seemed to grow heavy and leaden, something her hand was too weak to hold.

Miss Hershel was struck by the pallor of her assistant's face.

"You look as though you had a headache," she said. "A little walk might do you good. Suppose you run down to the corner and get me two spools of number sixty."

The girl went gladly. It was a relief to be away from Miss Hershel's curious eyes, away from the work she hated, and alone with her rebellion and disappointment.

She bought the thread, and retraced her steps listlessly. There was a man standing on the corner near the house. She scarcely noticed him at first, but, as she came nearer, something in her seemed to single him out from the various passers-by—the slight forward stoop of his broad shoulders, the tilt of his straw hat. Her heart began to bound in great, excited leaps. She came toward him blindly, as one stumbling in a mist of joy.

It was characteristic of the man that he did not advance to meet her. He waited to speak, in fact, until she paused before him. His greeting was, perhaps, more simple than eloquent.

"Hello, Lizzie," said Van Duyne. "I thought I'd give you a little surprise. I saw you when you went in that store. I was on my way to your boarding-house. Well, won't you say you're glad to see me?"

Miss Pratt's agitation took refuge in banalities.

"I thought that you'd write," she said. "Why didn't you?"

"What was the use?" he said. "I could only have told you that I was coming. That's what you expected, didn't you? Oh, I knew what your letter meant, all right. Well," he surveyed her comprehendingly, "how long is it going to take you to pack up and say good-bye to those frog-eaters?"

Miss Pratt assumed a sudden air of dignity sadly at variance with the expression of her eyes.

"I don't know what you mean," she evaded. "I didn't write you anything about going away. I wrote you that I was going to marry Mr. Oubert."

"Yes, you wrote that," said Van Duyne. "See here, we can't stand talking here all day. Let's get to the point. Lord, Lizzie, I know you like a book. You can't fool me. You ought to have found that out by this time. You went away to go on the stage, and you couldn't get there. I told you that, too. And somewhere or other you fell in with these people, and you write me that you're going to get married. Anybody could have seen through that scheme. Do you want to know why you wrote me? It's because you're sick of the whole business, and you wanted me to do just as I have done. Well, I'm here, and I've stood all the foolishness I'm going to. Now, you go in here and tell them that I've come for you, and this afternoon we'll find a minister and be married and go home."

The girl wavered a moment, coquettishly. To her, Van Duyne's domination was irresistible, his cleverness a marvel. In her heart was no more intention of disobeying him than of dismissing him, but she played with her happiness enjoyingly.

"There's my career," she told him. "I don't know what makes you think I want to give that up. I didn't say so. Mr. Oubert was going to help me a lot."

Van Duyne's face darkened. "Well, you do as you please," he said. "I've told you what I'll do. You come with me now, or you stay here. Well?"

Miss Pratt surveyed him adoringly.

"Oh, I guess I'll come," she said. "But Mr. Oubert will be all cut up." She giggled consciously. "My, I hate to tell his mother! She's awful foolish about him."

She stopped for a moment's reflection. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I won't tell her that I'm going. She's out anyway now, at the market downtown, for an hour or more. I'll just leave her a note, and ask her to send my trunk. It's real dramatic, isn't it?"

"Well," he said, "be quick about it. I'll wait here for you."

Miss Pratt joined him in something less than a half-hour. She had hastened indeed with the joyful alacrity of one who leaves a sinking ship for assured safety.

"I packed everything except that Juliet costume," she told him. "I didn't see it until I had locked my trunk, and I didn't think I had time to open it. I left the note on the table for Mrs. Oubert."

Van Duyne looked at her glowing face, admiringly.

"You don't act very sorry to leave," he laughed.

"Oh, it's been awful," confided Miss Pratt, jubilantly. "Those foreigners are awful funny, Gus."

It is perhaps the cruelest thing in life that grief is occasionally permitted to fall upon us when we are wonderfully happy. There is nothing at any time so pitiless, so merciless, as contrast.

Jules Oubert, as he approached his house this night, was in a golden mood that greater men might envy. He felt a divine pity for the rest of mankind shut out from the particular joy that was his own.

He threw a glance at the windows of the apartment as he ran up the steps, not that he had ever seen Miss Pratt's face there, but because the hope that one day he might see it was intoxicating.

Both Miss Hershel and his mother were in the room when he entered. He felt, rather than saw, that they were

alone, but his eyes searched the corners before he turned to his mother.

The sight of her face checked the familiar words of greeting on his lips. In the moment's silence, Miss Hershel stepped between the two. It was the instinctive action of the woman who seeks to shield her beloved from the death blow, but Jules's eyes were on his mother.

"Elizabeth!" he demanded. "Where is she?"

The old lady broke into a storm of voluble French, as Miss Hershel slipped softly through the door.

Where was she, indeed, the ingrate, the wretch, the monster without conscience! Stop, explain? Not Marie Oubert, indeed! Nay, let him read for himself. She had left a letter of her courtesy; let him read it, and see then if he would stop an honest woman from speaking the truth of one who so grandly deserved it!

She thrust Miss Pratt's letter into her son's hand, her old face strangely distorted between compassion and rage in its very ecstasy of longing to inspire him with something of her own contempt.

Oubert seized upon the paper hungrily. It seemed the one tangible thing in a chaos of bewilderment. Miss Pratt had written hurriedly and in pencil, but the words seemed to leap at his eyes from the page with un pitying clearness.

DEAR MRS. OUBERT,

I have decided to leave the stage and go home. I don't like New York, and, any way, I am going to be married. I have known the gentleman a long time, and he came for me this morning while you were out. Miss Hershel will pay you all my money for this week, and Mr. Van Duyne—the gentleman I am going to marry—will send the rest. Please tell Mr. Oubert that I am sorry I made a mistake, and that I let him think I was going to marry him. I didn't mean it, really, but I couldn't help it at the time. Will you ask him to please send my trunk? I've packed it. Send it to Mrs. Van Duyne, Morrisville, Vermont.

In haste,

ELIZABETH PRATT.

The letter fluttered from Jules's hand to the floor. The utter, careless

brutality of the words stunned him. It seemed to him afterward that even in this moment he would have given his life to have found one word of affection or appreciation.

"And that here on the table when I returned!" shrieked Madame Oubert. "Nothing else. And thou hast taken thy heart out for her to eat! Oh, the ingrate! the hussy! Where dost thou go?"

Her voice dropped into a sob as Jules entered the little bedroom, and closed the door behind him. His paramount idea was to find solitude and silence, to think, to realize.

He sat on the edge of the bed, his hands dangling loosely before him, as a man might sit among the ashes of a ruin that a day before had been his lordly stronghold. He had been jarred so suddenly from his dream that his waking was as yet unrealized. He was scarcely conscious, for the moment, that his very soul was writhing.

He glanced aimlessly about the room that had been hers. Presently, his eye caught something flung on the bed beside him. He touched it, looked at it. It was the Juliet costume. At the sight of it, something seemed suddenly to grip him by the throat.

Madame Oubert, listening anxiously at the door, heard presently a sound that gave her courage to enter. Her son turned to her instinctively, as he might have gone to her for comfort when he was a little child. The very simplicity of his sorrow gave it dignity. The sense of his humiliation, the bitterness of the knowledge that he had befooled himself at every turn, might seize him later. Now he was only conscious that the one thing beau-

tiful in life had fallen and been shattered.

In the morning, however, he greeted his mother with much of his old composure. If the night had left him old, it had also left him something of the calmness of age. The old woman, indeed, seemed the more agitated of the two. She ached for her son in every fiber of her body, but his composure silenced her while it annoyed. He even smiled at her while she set his coffee before him, and commented on the red geranium in his glass on the table.

"Miss Hershel it was who brought it up this morning," said the old woman. "It bloomed in the night, she said. 'Tis the last of the year; there will be no more. Oh," she nodded at her son, a blur of tears in her old eyes, "she hath a heart, that one."

Something in his face, as he gave her his customary morning farewell, thrilled her with a divine pity that startled her into forbidden words, but he silenced her tenderly, if peremptorily. The subject was to be a thing forever buried between them.

He stood a moment at the outer door, and looked out into the street. The dingy city sparrows fought about the curb; rows of huge, unlovely buildings loomed at either side. The morning was dull and promiseless. His day lay before him, long, monotonous and uneventful. Yesterday, these commonplaces had seemed almost glorified in his eyes, his work wonderful.

He seemed suddenly to see them for the first time as they were, but there was less of cynicism in his smile than of a certain light of gratitude.

"At least," said Jules Oubert to himself, "at least, I have had my dream."



DOOMED TO DISASTER

"Do you think Scadless has much chance of getting Miss Stocksanbonds?"
 "About as much chance as a glass punch-bowl has in the hands of a fat man without overshoes on an icy pavement."

O FAIRIES, CANNOT YOU?

By Louise Betts Edwards

O FAIRIES! cannot you
Be really, truly true?
If you knew how dull, and dreary,
Commonplace, and flat, and weary,
Life appears, without your eerie
Intervention in affairs,
It would soften your resistance
To a genuine existence;
You would surely heed our prayers
And conjure up yourselves—
Actual Fays and Elves.

When woods were full of things
With fairy wands and wings,
When each streamlet had its Nixie,
When each fireside had its tricky
Household Goblin, Sprite or Pixy,
Anything could happen then.
Life has lost its pristine glories
Since we learned these were but stories.
Come, Good Folk, return again!
Our waning faith revive;
We'll swear you're yet alive!

Good Fairy Godmama,
I wonder where you are?
Once, down silvery moonbeams sliding,
Or on thistle horses riding,
To our rescue you came gliding
When the foe our path beset;
Asking us to wish three wishes
On the spot—oh, 'twas delicious!
We could find you useful yet,
However old you are,
Good Fairy Godmama!

Ghost of our childhood's days!
Even you we'd gladly raise.
You made darkness interesting,
Cellars and back-stairs infesting,
And our youthful courage testing

With your hollow graveyard groans.
 Oh, this world is slow and sleepy
 Since you ceased to make us creepy,
 Good old, kind old Bloody-Bones!
 Come with your winning ways,
 Ghost of our childhood's days!

Dear Fairyland! what word
 Such visions ever stirred?
 Home of all that's bright and gracious,
 Where a wish is efficacious
 Spanish castles, grand and spacious,
 In a twinkling to uprear—
 You that dwell within that glamour,
 When you hear us mortals clamor
 At its rock-hewn door, give ear;
 Turn, as of old, the key,
 At—"Open Sesame!"



JANE SCOGGIN'S CHOICE

SHE is wringing her lily hands in an ecstasy of divine despair. Tearfully, and with a yearning glance that would penetrate the future or a steel battle-ship, she rests her chin upon her rosy palms, and even more firmly rivets her gaze on the cold, leafless garden, as if her very heart of hearts would break. The winds continue to sigh and whine a weird, yet soulful, melody through the rose-tree, among whose gray branches the gold-belted bees no longer buzz. And yet this sad and soulful symphony of the wind in the leafless branches is not quite so sad as is the perturbed, languorous soul of this liliated maid of Hackensack, who, in her dreamy attitude, seems to mock the pensive air of an angel in a stained-glass window, as she sighs, yea, almost moans, "Which shall it be?"

She watches the flocks of birds that drift about the somber sky, and the few handfuls of leaves that still scurry around the garden, and seems to be weighing something of more than ordinary importance in her mind, and yearning in vain for some one to take her gently by the hand and lead her into the rosy light of decision.

"I love them both," she soliloquizes; "yea, I love them both with a deep, all-consuming love, and yet I cannot, for the precious life of me, decide which I prefer of the two. Alas, alack, ah, well-a-day, I am in a dire predicament and sore distressed withal!"

Gazing still harder and more fiercely, if possible, into wind-swept space, her countenance wears an expression of intense anguish. She almost tears her golden tresses in this poignant grief that marks her deep despair. She cannot decide upon the name for which she would exchange her rugged but honest one of plain Jane Scoggin. As the wind sighs wearily on, and the windows rattle a sudden ghostly tattoo, she looks long and fondly at her latest picture, which represents her in a yearning dream of ineffable beauty, and almost sobs:

"I must choose which name shall be mine very soon now, instead of Jane Scoggin. Now, which shall it be, which shall it be? I must not decide too quickly or too rashly, for a poetical, romantic name is everything as regards success to a young woman who is going on the stage. Now, which shall it be, Mercedes Merivale or Beatrix Rosecroft?"

R. K. MUNKITTRICK.

IN PRAISE OF THE SWORD

By Maurice Maeterlinck

MAN, greedy of justice, tries in a thousand various manners, often empirical, sometimes wise, whimsical at other times and superstitious, to conjure up the shade of the great goddess necessary to his existence. A strange, elusive, and yet most living goddess! An immaterial divinity that cannot stand upright save in our secret heart; one of which we may say that, the more visible temples it has, the less real power it possesses. A day will break, perhaps, when it shall have no other palaces than our several consciences; and, on that day, it will reign really in the silence that is the sacred element of its life. In the meanwhile, we multiply the organs through which we hope that it will make itself heard. We lend it human and solemn voices; and, when it is silent in others and even in ourselves, we proceed to question it beyond our own conscience, on the uncertain confines of our being, where we become a part of chance and where we believe that justice blends with God and our own destiny.

II

It is this insatiable need which, on those points where human justice remained dumb and declared itself powerless, appealed in former days to the judgment of God. To-day, when the idea that we conceived of the divinity has changed its form and nature, the same instinct persists, so deep, so general, that it is perhaps but the half-transparent veil of an approaching truth. If we no longer look to God

III

to approve or condemn that which men are unable to judge, we now confide that mission to the unconscious, incognizable and, so to speak, future part of ourselves. The duel invokes no longer the judgment of God, but that of our future, our luck or our destiny, composed of all that is indefinite within us. It is called upon, in the name of our good or evil possibilities, to declare whether, from the point of view of inexplicable life, we are wrong or right.

There we have the indelibly human thing that is disentangled from amid all the absurdities and puerilities of our present encounters. However unreasonable it may appear, this sort of supreme interrogation, this question put in the night which is no longer illumined by intelligible justice, can scarcely be waived so long as we have not found a less equivocal manner of weighing the rights and wrongs, the essential hopes and inequalities of two destinies that wish to confront each other.

III

For the rest, to descend to the practical point of view from these regions haunted by more or less dangerous phantoms, it is certain that the duel, that is to say the possibility of securing justice for one's self outside the law and yet according to rule, responds to a need of which we cannot deny the existence. We do not live in the midst of a society that protects us sufficiently to deprive us, in all circumstances, of the right dearest to man's instinct.

It is unnecessary, I think, to enumerate the cases in which the protec-

tion afforded by society is insufficient. It would take less long to name those in which it suffices. Doubtless, for men who are lawfully weak and defenseless, it would be desirable that things were different; but, for those who are capable of defending themselves, it is most salutary that things should be as they are, for nothing suppresses initiative and personal character as does a too zealous and too constant protection. Remember that we are, before all, beings of prey and strife; that we must be careful not completely to extinguish within ourselves the qualities of primitive man, for it was not without reason that nature placed them there. If it is wise to restrain their excess, it is prudent to preserve their principle. We do not know the offensive tricks which the elements or the other forces of the universe have in store for us; and woe be to us, in all likelihood, if one day they find us entirely devoid of the spirit of vengeance, mistrust, anger, brutality, combativeness, and of many other faults, which are all very blameworthy from the human point of view, but which, much more than the most loudly-extolled abstemious virtues, have helped us to conquer the great enemies of our kind.

IV

It behooves us, therefore, to praise in general those who do not allow themselves to be offended with impunity. They keep up among us an idea of extra-legal justice by which we all profit and which would soon become exhausted without their aid. Let us rather deplore that they are not more numerous. If there were not quite so many good-natured souls, capable of chastising, but too ready to forgive, we should find much fewer evil-doers too ready to do wrong; for three-quarters of the wrong that is committed springs from the certainty of impunity. In order to maintain the vague fear and respect that allow the unfortunate unarmed to live and breathe almost freely

in a society teeming with knaves and dastards, it is the strict duty of all who are able to resist unpunishable injustice by means of an act of violence never to fail to do so. They thus restore the level of immanent justice. Thinking that they are defending only themselves, they defend in the aggregate the most precious heritage of mankind. I do not contend that it would not be better, in the greater number of cases, that the courts should intervene; but, until our laws become simpler, more practical, less costly and more familiar, we have no other remedy against a number of iniquities that are very real, although not provided for by the codes, than the fist or the sword.

V

THE fist is quick, immediate; but it is not conclusive enough; when the offense is at all grave, we see that it is really too lenient and ephemeral; and, besides, it has always rather vulgar movements and somewhat repugnant effects. It brings only a brutal faculty into play. It is the blindest and most unequal of weapons; and, since it evades all the conditions that adjust the chances of two ill-matched adversaries, it involves exaggerated reprisals on the part of the beaten combatant, which end by arming him with the stick, the knife or the revolver.

It is allowable in certain countries, in England, for instance. There the science of boxing forms part of elementary education, and its general practice curiously tends to remove natural inequalities; moreover, a whole organism of clubs, paternal juries and tribunals easy of access confirms or forestalls its exploits. But in France it would be a pity to return to it. The sword, which has there replaced it immemorably, is an incomparably more sensitive, serious, graceful and delicate instrument of justice. It is reproached with being neither equitable nor probative. But it proves, first of all, the quality of our attitude in the face of danger, and that already is a proof that is not without

value. For our attitude in the face of danger is exactly our attitude in the face of the reproaches or encouragements of the various consciences that lie hidden within us, of those which are both below and above our intelligible conscience, and which mingle with the essential and, so to speak, universal elements of our being. Next, it depends only upon ourselves that it should become as equitable as any human instrument, ever subject to chance, error and weakness, can be. Its art is certainly accessible to every healthy man. It demands neither abnormal muscular strength nor exceptional agility. The least gifted of us need devote to it but two or three hours of every week. He will acquire a suppleness and a precision sufficient soon to discover what the astronomers call his "personal equation," to attain his individual average, which is at the same time a general average that only a few fighters, a few idlers, succeed in surpassing, at the cost of long, painful and very ungrateful efforts.

VI

HAVING attained this average, we can entrust our lives to the point of the frail but redoubtable sword. It is the magician that at once establishes new relations between two forces which none would have dreamed of comparing. It allows the pigmy who is in the right to confront the colossus who is in the wrong. It gracefully leads enormous violence, horned like the bull, to lighter and brighter summits; and behold, the primitive animal is obliged to stand still before a power that has nothing left in common with the mean, shapeless, tyrannical virtues of earth; I mean weight, mass, quantity, the stupid cohesion of matter. Between the sword and the fist lie the breadth of a universe, an ocean of centuries and almost as great a distance as separates beast from man. The sword is iron and wit, steel and intelligence. It makes the muscles subservient to thought, and compels thought to respect the muscles that serve it. It is ideal and prac-

April 1904

tical, chimerical and full of good sense. It is dazzling and clear as lightning, insinuating, elusive and multiform as a ray of the sun or moon. It is faithful and capricious, nobly guileful, loyally false. It decks rancor and hatred with a smile. It transfigures brutality. Thanks to the sword, as by a fairy bridge swung over the abyss of darkness, reason, courage, rightful assurance, patience, contempt of danger, man's sacrifice to love, to an idea, a whole moral world enters as the master into the original chaos, reduces and organizes it. The sword is man's preëminent weapon, that weapon which, were all the others tried and itself unknown, would have to be invented, because it best serves his most various, his most purely human faculties, and because it is the most direct, the most tractable and the most loyal instrument of his defensive intelligence, strength and justice.

VII

BUT what is most admirable is that its decisions are not mechanical nor mathematically preëstablished. In this it resembles those games in which chance and knowledge are marvelously mingled in order to question our fortune; games almost mystical and always enthralling, in which man delights to sound his luck on the confines of his existence.

Bring face to face two adversaries of manifestly unequal powers: it is not inevitable, it is not even certain that the more vigorous and the more skilful will gain the day over the other. Once that we have conquered our personal mastership, our sword becomes ourselves, with our qualities and our defects. It is our firmness, our devotion, our will, our daring, our conviction, our justice, our hesitation, our impatience, our fear. We have cultivated it with care. We have risen to the height of the possibilities which it was able to offer us. We have given it all that we were able to dispose of; it restores to us integrally all that we entrusted to it. We have nothing where-

with to reproach ourselves; we are in accord with the instinct and duty of self-preservation. But the sword represents something more, and exactly that part of us which we are compelled to risk at the graver moments of existence. It personifies an unknown portion of our being, and personifies it in the most favorable and solemn conjuncture that man can imagine wherein to call upon his destiny, that is to say in circumstances in which the mysterious entity that lives within him is directly seconded by all the faculties subjected to his consciousness.

It thus brings face to face not only two forces, two intelligences and two liberties, but also two chances, two for-

tunes, two mysteries, two destinies, which, over and above the rest, like the gods of Homer, preside over the combat, run, flash, dart and meet upon its blade. When it seems to be striking before us in space, it is really knocking at the doors of our fate; and, while death hovers around it, he who handles it feels that it is escaping from its previous bondage and suddenly obeying other laws than those which used to guide it in the fencing-school. It fulfils a secret mission; before pronouncing sentence, it judges us; or rather, by the mere fact that we are wielding it distractedly in the presence of the great and formidable enigma, it forces our destiny to judge ourselves.



FIRST LOVE

“WHY do you look from the window so,
 Little Felicia, daughter of mine?
 There still is the long white seam to sew,
 And the white lamb's wool to spin.”
 “Oh, mother, below, there in the snow,
 Stands a little lad with a mouth like wine—
 A little lad with a carven bow,
 And he makes as though he would enter in,
 Mother of mine.”

“Nay—there is no one there at all,
 Little Felicia, my idle one;
 Naught I see but the white snow's fall,
 And your task is still the same.”
 “Oh, mother, harken, I hear him call,
 ‘Pray, sweetheart, is the door undone?
 Let me in who am weak and small.’
 May I bid him enter, in Pity's name,
 Mother of mine?”

“Nothing I hear and naught I see,
 Little Felicia, who work so ill;
 And there's much to do ere darkness be—
 Come, daughter, your task begin.”
 But little Felicia blushing
 Turned away from the window-sill;
 “Oh, mother, I spake no word,” quoth she,
 “But I fear—I fear he hath entered in,
 Mother of mine.”

McCREA PICKERING.

AN AMATEUR JUDGMENT DAY

By Eleanor A. Hallowell

THERE is no friendship in the world so startlingly intimate as the casual friendship of professional women when they choose to lay aside their masks and sun themselves in the glow of mutual humor and cynicism. Torn from the leisurely caution of the home circle, and weaned once for all from the conservatism of the sheltered life, the professional woman develops, as it were, a veritable instinct for friendship at first sight. Here to-day and there to-morrow, eager, rushing, and doggedly good-natured, she realizes all too soon that, if she wishes her pleasures, she must snatch them, and the pleasure best worth snatching is the friendship with women of her own kind.

The professional woman of thirty or thereabouts, if she has lived at all, has presumably outlived her keenest personal interest in men and things, but her general interest is increased a thousandfold, and, in the absorbing study of other women's problems, she seeks the proof or disproof of her own experiences. Joke for joke, irony for irony, bitterness for bitterness, she trades life with her woman friends, hiding herself always behind a bulwark of generalization and surmise and banter. Her personal truth is seldom all truth, nor her fiction all fiction, but she understands her friends, and her friends understand her, and they talk together freely and daringly of things that they would scarcely venture to mention to the friends of their childhood.

You cannot, for instance, say to your lifelong chum, "I loved a man once," nor to your mother, "Men are fickle wretches," nor yet to your sister, "This

June night smells like the old June nights," without starting your dear ones immediately on a dangerous trail of memory, imagination or suspicion. But to your new friend you can make any statement you please, and that statement has no probable whence or where to it. You can tell a stranger what you wish, no more, no less, fairly confident in her case that no rallying memory or tell-tale line of association will ever supply the missing evidence of name or date or place. There is something very joyously safe about the friendships of one's maturer years.

In such a bond of close, but comparatively new, comradeship, three women sat one night in a dark, fantastic attic studio—an Actress, a Writer and an Artist. The sprightly little Actress and the taciturn Writer were curled up sumptuously on a deeply pillowed window-seat, drinking hot chocolate from big Canton-china cups; but the Artist crouched alone on the floor by the fire, burrowing in a tin "strong box," from which she now and then took papers or letters and threw them reluctantly into the white-birch blaze. From time to time, the two visitors on the window-seat scoffed their hostess over her task, and egged her on gleefully with mock-heroics, but the Artist ignored their comments with a sphinx-like smile.

All three women were good-looking in their way, with the rugged, definite ardor of the young professional woman; but **each** face bore the unmistakable stamp of the woman who is spending herself. The domestic woman, you see, invests her all in the "Holy Institution of Matrimony," a presumably rep-

utable concern, and lives forever afterward on her interest of husband and children. But the single woman, making no investment either good or bad, must live, perforce, on her principal, and, so living, she acquires in the expenditure of herself an inevitable tinge of recklessness, which plays a certain havoc with eyes and mouth.

Of the three women in the studio, the Artist's face showed least sign of wear and tear, and contrasted rather peacefully with the Actress's vivacious extravagance, or the Writer's anxiously hoarded strength. The three had been boon companions through the Winter, in an unusual, three-cornered sort of friendship, and were meeting this night for presumably the last time before they separated for the Summer, or perhaps for years.

After a longer silence than usual in the room, the Artist looked up from her firelight task, and laughed.

"It's funny," she said, "how, six months ago, I didn't even know that you people were born, and here you are in my room at a wake, a regular orgy of dead love, watching me burn up all my old letters." And her laugh faltered a little as she bent lower over some particular treasure.

"Oh, burn them all up. Hurry! hurry!" cried the Actress. "We didn't come to help you read them. We came to help you burn them up. Burn them up, quick! You're as good as lost if you read a single one. Don't go to pieces now in the very moment of victory. Hurry!"

But the Artist only hesitated a little longer over her task.

"If you could only be sure," she mused, "if you could only be perfectly sure that you'd never be sorry you burned them. But suppose, after a while, you were lonesome without them——"

"Nonsense," persisted the Actress; "the sooner you get rid of such things, the better. That's why we came over to-night to see you through. It isn't a safe job to do alone. I tell you, a love-hurt won't ever heal while there's a single old letter or faded flower left in

the wound. You've just got to probe right through. And I guess I know," she added, with strident bravado, as the color flamed into her face.

The Artist stopped suddenly, her hand half ready to feed the blaze with a little red-leather diary.

"That's all very well," she admitted, "and, of course, I don't know who your man was or what happened to him—I never heard you refer to him before—but will you swear by all your gods that you haven't at this present moment a single love-token on you?"

From the Actress's face the color fled like a tide that would never rise again. Slowly she rose from her seat, and, with a queer, incongruous sort of majesty, stripped the chiffon sleeve from her arm, and, turning the soft, white flesh of her inner arm, displayed some finely tattooed initials—not her own.

"I was a fool once," she said, briefly, "but it was a long time ago. If you care to see the date——"

"Pull down your sleeve!" cried the Writer. "Good heavens, we didn't mean to quiz you! Have the rest of the alphabet put on, and then people will think that's the way you learned your letters. *That* needn't stop this sacrifice."

But still the Artist dallied over the little red diary.

"You can't help feeling," she argued, "that, perhaps, if you keep on waiting"—her voice grew suddenly very tender—"perhaps things will come out all right, after all, and you'd be glad you trusted and—waited."

"Waited?" shouted the Writer, starting bolt upright and staring like a suddenly awakened wild thing; "waited? Heaven help you! I knew a woman once who waited. She and the man had known each other from childhood, and were all the world to each other, and they were just going to be married when the man was caught in a railroad accident and hurt his head and went crazy and was put in an asylum. And the doctors said there was one chance, just one chance

in a thousand of his getting well again. But the chance didn't seem to happen, and the months went by, and the years—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven years—and still the chance did not happen. And youth went by, and beauty, and chances of travel and culture and other men's love, but the girl would not leave her little country home from which twice a month she could journey by train to the asylum, and sit a little agonizing while with the lover who never recognized her. Her family pleaded with her, her friends tormented her, but she would not give the man up. She simply could not risk that one chance of the man coming back to his senses and finding that the woman he loved had deserted him. Is it just mind that you love in a man? Nonsense, for she loved him when his mind was gone. Was it just his body, then? No, for she would have loved him, dead!

"Well, after she had waited nine years—we were talking about waiting, weren't we?—after nine years, her mother died and left the girl some small property and the charge of a crippled brother, and the girl took her share of the money and robbed her crippled brother of his, and engaged the biggest doctor in the land to come and study her lover's case, and the doctor came and studied a while and then operated, and the operation was successful, and as the sick man came gradually out of the stupor and blank of those nine years—he fell in love with his trained nurse, and married her!"

"The beast!" cried the Actress, passionately.

"He wasn't a beast, either," retorted the Writer, jumping to her feet. "He couldn't help it. He didn't even remember about the first woman till after his marriage. I say he couldn't help it. It's fate that makes things like that. Of course, it's just a story, a hideous, hateful story, but"—turning gently to the girl by the fire—"don't give fate such a chance at you."

With one gasping breath, the Artist snatched all her remaining treasures up in her arms, and fairly hurled the

distorted, crackling mass into the fire, and the other two women came down and crouched on the floor beside her, and warmed their hands gloatingly at the blaze.

"Oh, these secrets, these secrets!" mused the little Actress, with dramatic mockery.

"Goodness," said the Writer, wryly, "it's going to be awkward at the Judgment Day when 'the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.' I certainly sha'n't tell everything I know, unless I am pressed."

"Oh, I guess you'll be pressed, fast enough," the Actress volunteered, cheerfully; and then added, with sudden whimsical earnestness: "but, let's all promise each other here and now that we'll stop up our ears when any member of this trio gets up to recite."

In a flash, the three women clasped sturdy hands on the grotesque promise, and then, with joke and laughter, jumped to their feet, shook off their brooding thoughts, and, gathering up their hats and coats, started downtown with the Writer to get a Welsh rabbit, before she went on night duty at her editorial desk.

For an hour the three friends lingered over their hotel chafing-dish, well used to playing house and making themselves at home with any sort of utensil from a teaspoon to a gas-range. With chaff and banter and frank speculation they discussed the future and ignored the past, and when, at last, the time came for good-bye, they parted brusquely with handshakes, as men do.

The Writer went to her work, and the Actress to the theatre to meet some other friends, but the Artist ran home alone as fast as she could, and hurried up her studio stairs, and unlocked her door as though a life depended on it, and, scrambling to the fireside, raked out all the charred letters she could find, and the blistered wreck of a little red diary, and gathered them hastily up in her hands, and put them tenderly back into the tin box, and took them all to bed with her and cried over them through the night—until Dawn, creeping like a thief across the

city roof-tops, had stolen every hope of sleep from the city's toilers.

It was a long time before the three friends met again. The Actress went West immediately to fill a permanent engagement with a stock company; the Writer was sent on a semi-political venture to Cuba; and the Artist, left to her own devices, modeled a statue of a lion or a tiger or a bear, or something, which set the whole city talking, and was subsequently married, though whether or not to the man of her original choice is a matter of conjecture only. A year went by with a desultory correspondence, then a second year with just a tardy gift at Christmas time, then a third year with absolute silence—except, at the very end, for a telegram that went whizzing one day from the bustling office of a big Western theatre to the tranquil home in a New England village where the Artist and her clerical husband were rearing a dangerous little family of half-breeds—bohemian and Puritan. And the telegram said, with astonishing assurance:

Meet me Waldorf, New York, Saturday. Bring money. Writer in trouble. Imperative.

ACTRESS.

The Artist and her husband looked long at each other across the mystery of that yellow message. Then the Artist got up, and began to scurry about to pack a suit-case.

"I've got to go, dear," she said; "of course I've got to go. My friend, the Writer, is in trouble. Mother'll come over and take care of the children, and you—please make me out a cheque for two hundred dollars. I guess that will do. I always told you you'd have to pay for marrying a bohemian. Will you miss me? I hope so, but I've got to go."

And twelve hours later she was wringing hands with the Actress in a waiting-room of the big Waldorf Hotel, exclaiming, with her first long breath: "What's the matter with the Writer?"

"Oh, come to breakfast first," entreated the Actress, "there's plenty of time to talk;" and led the way nonchalantly into the sumptuous dining-

room, whither the Artist followed with novel timidity, and the two women seated themselves in the loneliest corner they could find.

"You're a very motherly-looking person for a bohemian," the Actress said, at last, smiling dazzlingly into her friend's tranquil eyes. "Two youngsters, is it? Well, that does seem funny."

Then, toying a second with her bread, she remarked, casually, "There's a rather sensational divorce case going to be tried in New York to-morrow."

"Is there?" said the Artist, with languid interest.

"Yes," the Actress continued, with a trifle more vigor, "and our old playmate, the Writer, is named as co-respondent."

The Artist gave a little gasp of dismay, and clutched at her dress as though her heart had cramped within her.

"Yes," persisted the Actress, with drawling intensity, "and the plaintiff is a woman—who—used to be a—trained nurse, and her husband was a—former patient in an insane asylum——"

Coldly, quizzically, almost insolently, she watched the effect of her words. For a second, they seemed to fall meaningless and flat, and then, all of a sudden, the Artist's face kindled and flamed with comprehension. Her flesh palpably winced, but her spirit looked out undaunted from her startled eyes.

"What can we do?" she stammered. "We must do something."

"Yes, we certainly must do something," the Actress acknowledged, "but that something will be precious little. I am afraid that our old playmate can't put up the slightest ghost of a defense—legally. The facts have been suppressed so far, but I understand from a journalist I know that the newspapers will fairly reek with the affair to-morrow. It seems that the husband is a rather clever fellow, though in wretched health, and the wife has recently acquired large wealth and social ambitions, and it also seems that there has been trouble for a long

time—perhaps for four years.” She watched her words go stabbingly home. “The man has been trying for a long time to get a divorce, but his wife would not free him, just for spite, I believe—she has never claimed to love him. And now things have smashed. The Writer’s fate has overtaken her, and she has got to stand up and turn her life inside out for the public to sneer at. Oh, my heavens, what a price to pay!”

“But what do you propose to do?” choked out the Artist, over her coffee. “I’m willing to help with *anything* you suggest.”

“What do I propose to do? Well, take you over to my boarding-house, and keep you shut up there with me till the case is over, and then we’ll go to her with all the money we’ve scraped together, and we’ll pack her trunk and help her go away somewhere—with her man, if she wants him.”

“With her man?” gasped the Artist, with a little quiver of horror.

“Yes, with her man,” said the Actress, stridently. “It’s none of our business whom she goes with. If you’d waited ten years for a crazy man, don’t you think you’d be willing to stake your original claim against any mere laundry-check type of marriage certificate?”

But the Artist did not answer. Her eyes were far away, and gradually into them stole a look of tenderness and yearning that quite displaced their former tenants of wonder and pain.

“I declare,” exclaimed the Actress, “I do believe you are homesick for your husband and your children.”

“I am,” said the Artist, briefly.

“And so, presumably, is the Writer,” drawled the Actress, over the top of her coffee-cup.

A week later, the Actress and the Artist stood knocking at a bedroom door in an inconspicuous New York boarding-house. The Artist was much the braver and calmer of the two, but, because the Actress’s own eyes were smarting with unshed tears, she turned on her married friend, and snapped out:

“If you cry, I’ll scratch your eyes out!”

“Oh, knock again,” said the Artist, good-naturedly, “knock again; she’s surely there.”

But there was no answer. Then the Artist took her two little gray-gloved fists, and beat an old familiar tattoo signal on the door. In a second, there was a creaking step across the floor, the sound of a turning key, and the door was opened cautiously on the Writer’s haggard eyes.

“Is it really you?” she asked, blankly, dragging them into the room, and locking the door quickly behind them.

“Yes, it’s really us, you great goose,” said the saucy Actress; “and did you think that you could keep us out? Where are you going? You seem to have your bag packed and your hat on.”

“I don’t know just what I shall do,” responded the Writer, her white face stripped and ravished of every trace of human emotion. “But I’ve got to go somewhere, and I’m going to Washington to-night.”

“I’m glad we just caught you,” the Actress cried, gaily, from her perch on the table. “We thought you might be strapped, so we brought you round what we had. I think it’s about seven hundred or so. It will give you a start, anyway. Why don’t you go abroad? We’ve been here a week waiting for you.”

“A w-e-e-k?” gasped the Writer, in an icy sort of dismay. “I didn’t see you in the court-room.”

“Naturally not,” laughed the Actress, “because we weren’t there. We were over at my boarding-house, making pajamas, or some such frivolity, for the Artist’s husband.”

A gleam of forlorn hope flickered and died in the Writer’s eyes. “But the newspapers,” she stammered, “those horrible newspapers?”

Then the Artist threw herself down at the Writer’s feet, and clutched her round her knees like an eager child.

“But we didn’t read the newspapers,” she laughed out, through her tears. “We didn’t even *see* one.”

MUSIQUES D'AUTOMNE

LA CHANSON du beau soir qui meurt parmi les bois
 Redit l'écho lointain d'harmonieuses voix
 Et le trille incertain que, sur la flûte oblique,
 Pan fait trembler comme un adieu mélancolique . . .

Le vieux Pan qui déjà ne voit plus le soleil
 Que dans l'obscur reflet de l'automne vermeil,
 Chante et pleure et soupire et doucement module
 Sur son roseau le rêve errant du crépuscule.

La tristesse émouvante et les silences lourds
 Qu'on v it s'appesanter sur les sombres velours
 Des feuilles, ont alors je ne sais quel mystère
 Ou la mort des beaux jours fait renaître la terre.

Les arbres dépouillés n'étouffent plus l'accord
 Des souvenirs que l'horizon recèle encorê
 Et la flûte du faune évoque sous les branches
 Des voix d'oiseaux, des soleils clairs, des lunes blanches,

Des matins parfumés de calices ouverts,
 De longs repos, sous la fraîcheur des côteaux verts
 Et la jeune vigueur prompte aux rapides courses
 Et les nymphes soudain surprises près des sources. . . .

Il en redit l'éclat perdu dans l'infini,
 D'azur flambant que les nuages ont terni,
 Il en redit la joie et la pleure, passée,
 Et sa musique est comme une âme délaissée.

Ah! Poète, que tu tressailles à ce chant!
 Viens l'écouter, à ta fenêtre, et, te penchant,
 Regarde . . . L'ombre est triste où seul l'hiver s'avance
 Et c'est l'orgue du coin qui pleure sa romance . . .

VICOMTE JACQUES DE BEAUFORT.



HER SLIGHT KNOWLEDGE

MRS. BENHAM—If I go on the witness-stand I shall tell all I know.
 BENHAM—That won't confuse the jury any.

A QUESTION OF HONOR

By Ruth Milne

THE dusk of a Winter's afternoon was fast settling into dark, and the glow of the open fire seemed still more welcome in contrast to the gloom outside the windows.

"Tea, Wharton?" murmured Mrs. Carleton, contentedly, from among the cushions on the settle, as the butler lighted the candles that stood in dignified antique holders about the oak-paneled hall. "Where's Mrs. Ellis?"

"I couldn't say, m'm," responded the butler, a shade of reproach in his tone. "She left at three, m'm. She said she might make calls—she had her card-case with her, m'm—or she might go skating—she had her skates with her—or she might be back to tea—"

"Well," said Mrs. Carleton, amiably, "it's all right as long as she didn't have the tea-service with her, Wharton—"

"Yes'm," said that functionary. "Mrs. Ellis always has tea served at five, m'm. She says it don't matter whether she's here or not, so long as the tea is." Wharton rearranged a cup or two with cautious care. "Shall you want me, m'm?" he inquired, after a moment's silence.

"Oh, no, I'll pour for myself, Wharton, and any one else that comes."

"Thank you, m'm," said Wharton, vanishing into the outlying dusk of the passage as a soft frou-frou of skirts sounded on the stairs.

"Come and have some tea," called Mrs. Carleton, with vague hospitality. "I can't see who you are—oh, it's Patty. Our hostess has gone to the lunatic asylum, or some other con-

genial place, and left Providence to pour tea. Wharton says she always does that."

"That's what makes her house-parties so nice, usually," said Patty, a little listlessly. "She never puts herself out—"

"So," said Mrs. Carleton, beginning deftly to manipulate the tea-service, "one never feels obliged to put one's self out—not even when one's visit ought to be over. Yes, Mabel certainly is a dear."

"My visit ends to-morrow," said Patty, still more listlessly. "I was only asked for a week."

"And Jack's?"

"Really," said Patty, with badly assumed nonchalance, "I don't know."

Mrs. Carleton dropped the sugar-tongs with a clatter.

"Don't tell me you two have quarreled," she implored. "Why, you've set us all such an example! Mabel was saying only this morning that it made her wish to have some one make love to her again—some one, that is, with a right to, you know. And as for me, I nearly went for a drive with Dick, this afternoon, and we've been married six years. But, if you've quarreled, we shall all be at swords' points again in a moment."

"We haven't quarreled," said Patty. "We just don't—"

"Agree?" Mrs. Carleton took her up. "My dear, one never agrees with a man. Life would lose all interest. Fancy if a man admired only one's pretty frocks! The joy of the creatures is that when you have on a positive dud, and are looking like a blowsy milkmaid, they're suddenly in-

spired with the idea that you are a thing of beauty. That's so much more satisfactory than a mere looking-glass."

"It's not," said Patty, with dignity, "a question of frocks."

Mrs. Carleton shrugged her shoulders.

"You can't tell," she said. "You're such a ridiculous baby. At any rate, it's a question of looking-glasses—it's all one, whether they're physical or moral. Now, I suppose Jack thinks one thing and you think another, so you are crying your pretty eyelids pink because he is so corrupt as to think you attractive, when you're really only a blowsy milkmaid."

"It's not a question of looks, either," said Patty, dolefully.

"My dear," protested Mrs. Carleton, "do try to be metaphorical; or else have a cup of tea, and tell me about it. I can't be literal and uninformed at the same time. It's expecting too much of me."

"I'd like to," said Patty, wistfully responsive. "You're always so clever! But I don't think Jack would like it."

"My dear child"—Mrs. Carleton's protest was emphatic—"Jack will like anything that will make you like him again. What's it all about?"

Patty put down her cup, and settled herself comfortably, hands clasped about her knees, and the lights from the very new diamond on her left hand flashing green-and-red responses to the flicker of the fire.

"It's really," she said, explanatorily, "a question of honor."

"It's really," murmured Mrs. Carleton, sipping her tea, "a question of looking-glasses. Go on."

"I've always thought," said Patty, "that I was—that I had——"

"That you were, in fact, the soul of honor," said Mrs. Carleton. "So you are, my dear. So is Jack. But you aren't two souls with but a single thought. Is that it?"

"I'd like to know what you would say!" Patty's desire was fairly breathless in intensity. "I'm sure

you're——" She hesitated, and Mrs. Carleton finished:

"Another soul? Not the least in the world, my dear. I leave all that to Dick. Still, I can tell you the point of view of that sort of person."

"What you would say, if you were——?"

"Honorable—instead of sensible. Exactly. If you want that opinion——"

"I do," said Patty, with decision; "awfully. Only, I'll leave out the names. You see, a very dear friend of mine is engaged to a man Jack knows. He used to be one of Jack's best friends. No one knows yet," she added, parenthetically, "that they're engaged, except Jack and myself."

"I suppose she told you in confidence?" insinuated Mrs. Carleton.

Patty nodded.

"And you told Jack?"

Patty flushed.

"Jack never tells anything," she said.

"Of course not. You are, plainly, two souls of honor, as I said. Go on."

"Well," said Patty, a little less assuredly, "you see, Jack knows something dreadful about this man——"

Mrs. Carleton raised her eyebrows.

"Dreadful?"

"Bad enough to break up their friendship. And they've been friends since they were boys."

"It wasn't a quarrel?"

"No." Patty was very positive on that point. "Jack had to admit that it was something he didn't approve of, about the man. And the girl he is to marry is one of the sweetest girls you can think of. Don't you think"—she appealed earnestly—"that it's awful to let her marry such a man ignorantly?"

"I see," said Mrs. Carleton, meditatively; "Jack knows something against this man—something bad enough to make him break off their friendship. So you wish Jack to tell the girl?"

"To tell me," interrupted Patty.

"And to let you tell her?"

"I wouldn't," declared Patty, virtuously, "ask Jack to tell her himself. But I do think he ought at least to let me."

"I was, myself," said Mrs. Carleton, reminiscently, "the soul of honor—at twenty. But at thirty—" She paused. "Still, I think any woman would agree with you," she said, with the manner of a judge handing down a decision.

"I'm so glad," said Patty; but her tone was that of a condemned, rather than an acquitted, criminal. "I told Jack that it wasn't honorable, at all, his standing by that man. It was just clannishness!—honor among thieves, you know."

Mrs. Carleton nodded.

"Of course, you told him that. That's quite what you would say. And then he said, I suppose, that not even you could question his honor. And then you went up-stairs and cried all the afternoon. He probably is out tramping through snow-drifts to freeze his sorrow. If men only knew how much less trouble it is to cry!"

"I'm so glad you sympathize with me," said Patty, still more mournfully.

"Oh, I sympathize!" said Mrs. Carleton; then, turning suddenly, "of course, you know you're wrong."

"Wrong!" Patty's astonishment was genuine.

"A woman is always wrong about such things." Mrs. Carleton was again judicial. "We haven't any sense of honor, really. We have consciences."

"Isn't it the same thing?" demanded Patty.

"My dear," protested Mrs. Carleton, "it's often the exact opposite. If a man were to follow the dictates—I think that's the word—of a woman's conscience in matters of honor, he'd be an outcast in six months."

Patty considered the matter.

"I don't think much of their honor, then," she said, at last.

Mrs. Carleton shrugged her shoulders.

"As a working basis," she said,

"it's far better than a conscience—one's conscience is so closely related to one's digestion. Men always have some rule about things that they can fall back on—'Stick by the ship,' or something of that sort. They always agree, you know, as if they had a code—like the old one for dueling."

"So do women," asserted Patty, defiantly.

"Oh, no! Women agree sometimes. They stand by their sex, for example—theoretically, at least. That's why I said they would agree with you this time—it was between a man and a woman. But, between two men, or two women, you'd be likely to get as many opinions as there were women to give them."

"I don't believe," said Patty, obstinately, "that men would think Jack was right about this."

A step echoed along the passage.

"Here comes Dick," said Mrs. Carleton, hastily. "Now, isn't he the soul of honor, too?"

"Oh, yes," admitted Patty. "Every one knows he's that."

"Well, if I ask him—diplomatically, you know—and he agrees with Jack——"

"He won't," said Patty, still obstinate.

"If he does, will you tell Jack you were wrong? Quick!" as Mr. Carleton's step hesitated at the doorway.

"If he does," said Patty, in doubtful accents, "I will."

"Oh, Dick," called Mrs. Carleton, "come and have some tea, and be an arbitration committee."

"What's the quarrel?" asked Mr. Carleton, emerging from the gloom of the passage into the firelight. "Mostly rum, please, Kate, with a little tea in it."

"We're discussing a point of honor," said Mrs. Carleton, easily. "Patty thinks one thing, and I think another, and we wish you to decide who's right."

"It's a story, you know," interpolated Patty, weakly.

Mr. Carleton took his cup of tea, and seated himself on the settle.

"Beastly cold out," he said. "You ought not to have let Jack walk to town, Miss Patty—ten miles in such weather! What's the story?"

"Why, it's this," said Mrs. Carleton, hastily, with a glance at Patty's downcast face. "The author makes a man and a girl engaged to each other—unannounced, you know, so there is no public opinion in the matter. And another man, who was formerly a friend of the man's, knows something against him——"

"Something very much against him," interpolated Patty.

"Yes," Mrs. Carleton acquiesced, "a bad enough thing to break up their friendship. Now, the question is, ought he to tell the girl?"

"Ought who to tell the girl?" demanded Mr. Carleton, densely. "The man that's engaged to her?"

"No, the other man, the one who used to be his friend. I think he ought, and Patty thinks he ought not."

Patty swallowed hard over this presentation of the truth, but kept silent.

"Is the girl likely to find it out from any one else?" queried Mr. Carleton. "So that it would be kinder to tell her, I mean?"

"Oh, no," said Patty. "It's between the two men—something that showed the first man up in his true light, you know."

"And it happened while they were friends?" said Mr. Carleton. "Not after they broke up?"

"It was because of this that they

did break up," explained Mrs. Carleton, lucidly.

Mr. Carleton took a long sip of tea.

"Your story must have been written by a woman," he said. "I don't think a man would even raise the question. If they'd been good friends, you know—of course, you're right, Miss Patty—he couldn't possibly tell."

Mrs. Carleton laughed.

"You never do agree with me, Dick," she said, "not even when I tell you I'm a fright."

"Least of all, then," he said, half inaudibly.

"No, as a looking-glass you're a failure," said Mrs. Carleton, and again she laughed.

There was a stamping of horses outside, and the door swung open to admit Mrs. Ellis, with Jack following, cold and dejected, in her wake.

"I found him perishing by the wayside," announced Mrs. Ellis. "Give him some tea, somebody, quick! He's walked nine miles and three-quarters. Patty—that's a good child," as Patty, with an apologetic flush, made her frou-frouing way to the disconsolate Jack, who was divesting himself of sundry outer garments in the coat-room.

"Who's pouring, any way?" demanded Mrs. Ellis. "I meant to be at home, but I went bobbing instead—haven't done it in years. Where is the rest of my party? Who *is* pouring?"

"Providence," said Mrs. Carleton, with a self-satisfied smile.



THE KIND HE'S USED TO

"HOMLYSS says he finds these substitutes for coffee more delicious, if anything, than coffee itself."

"Poor old chap! has he lived in boarding-houses as long as that?"

HASSAN AND HASSOUN

By Clinton Scollard

S AID Hassan to Hassoun:
 "Twere a boon
 If this love that enfolds us as fire,
 This dream of delight and desire,
That is torture at midnight and noon,
 Should lapse, should forever be laid
 In sepulture, a shadowless shade,
Like a lifeless and lusterless moon,"
Said Hassan to Hassoun.

Said Hassoun to Hassan:
 "You would ban
 All our days and our ways with a gloom
 Like the outermost regions of Doom!
We should dwell in one long Ramadan,
 A fast with no feasting for aye,
 And beauty and bloom plucked away,
And only a desert to scan,"
Said Hassoun to Hassan.

Said Hassan to Hassoun:
 "'Tis a tune
 That tricks us, this love, that allures,
 Till a frenzy engrips us no cures
May allay, for all bird-voices croon,
 And the winds and the waves alike frame
 One lyrically maddening name,
A very device of Mahoun,"
Said Hassan to Hassoun.

Said Hassoun to Hassan:
 "'Tis a plan
 That Allah has shaped to uplift
 From the silt and the shard and the drift
The spirit we christen as 'man,'
 Through it do our eyes first behold
 What the word of the Prophet foretold—
Paradise—for 'twas there love began,"
Said Hassoun to Hassan.

THE SMART SET

Thus Hassan and Hassoun!—

Like a rune

You may hear them run on and run on,
Blithe Youth and Old Age that is wan,
Disputing from midnight till noon.

While each speaks, so solemn, his part,
What is love but the same in the heart,
Outlasting, an infinite span,
Both Hassoun and Hassan!



IN A UTAH JEWELRY STORE

“WHAT can I show you, sir?”
“I want to buy a dozen engagement-rings.”



THROUGH THE WINDOW

LOVE, through the window of our little room
I see the moonlight cold upon the snow.
Do you remember how the May-night bloom
Blew through this window half a year ago?

The pale moon hung above the apple-boughs
As tenderly as you hung over me;
While the warm wind that breathed our whispered vows
Returned us waxen petals ceaselessly.

When through our window we shall watch the night
Of our love-life walking the moonlit skies,
The rime of many Winters may lie white
Upon our heads, and dim our yearning eyes;

But in our hearts the memories of Spring
And apple-blossoms and the tender moon
Shall be forever, and pale Death shall bring
Us wind-blown petals for a bridal boon.

ELSA BARKER.

MRS. REDEFER'S RUBIES

By Zinn Gould

“YES, they are beautiful, are they not?”

Mrs. Redefer passed through the low window to the piazza, where the company were gathered after dinner. Even in the cold light of the moon the three superb rubies glowed like smoldering coals against her white skin.

“And you should know,” she added, “they have a history.”

“Most rubies have,” muttered Willie Buttonby, blowing smoke-rings through the clematis. “It’s gone on so many years it’s become a habit with them.”

“You be quiet, Willie, and keep your vapid remarks to yourself,” enjoined Mrs. Hewton, arranging a scarf over her generous bosom.

“Oh, well, I was only thinking that——”

“Don’t think, Willie. It isn’t a thing you can do well. And now be quiet, and let Mrs. Redefer tell us about the rubies.”

“To begin with,” Mrs. Redefer took up the word, “they were given to me by Uncle Jack just after he came back from Calcutta, where, you know, he was consul— There goes Redefer,” interrupting herself, as one of the men quietly strolled out on the terrace. “He always disappears when I tell the story of my rubies, though why, I can’t exactly see.”

“Probably he doesn’t like the flash,” hinted Willie.

“Now, there you go again! Haven’t I warned you to be quiet? Next, I’ll box your ears.”

“I submit.” He leaned back in his chair, and looked toward Redefer wandering among the box-trees on the terrace.

“They were given me, as I said, by Uncle Jack after he came back from India,” Mrs. Redefer went on. “He had them from the rajah of Singhduleep for a service—hiding him in the consulate during an insurrection, I believe—anyway, he saved the rajah’s life at the time, though later, in another revolt, he was fatally wounded. Before he died, he sent for uncle and gave him the rubies.

“‘Excellency,’ he said, ‘I give you these rubies. They cannot recompense the service you once did me, though they are priceless. They have never till now left my family since they rolled from the wounds that killed the radiant Zulekia, favorite princess of Asoka, king of Behar, and my ancestor. At least, that is the legend. They are her life-blood. One evening, as the king strolled on the terrace, listening to the nightingales among the trees in the garden, he almost fell over the corpse of the beautiful Zulekia, lying stark and cold in the light of the full moon. A jeweled dagger buried to its hilt in her white bosom told the tale. Distracted, Asoka fell on his knees and drew the blade from its mortal sheath, bringing with it a tiny crimson stream that stained the marble of the terrace. Next morning, slaves of the palace brought three rubies to the bedside of the stricken monarch. They had found them where the princess had lain. “These,” cried Asoka, clasping them to his lips, “are the life-blood of my beloved. With me and mine shall they rest forever, and cursed be he who, by foul measures, becomes possessed of them!” Excellency, they have never been owned out of the line of my ancestor. They need no strong

box—no guard of honor. They will take care of themselves. Once, twice, thrice they were stolen, but the curse of Asoka holds good. Taken by violence, by violence shall they be returned, and in blood, too, since in blood they were born. Only by free gift may they pass to another. I am the last of my race. I give them to you.' Next morning, the rajah had joined his ancestor Asoka."

"Goodness gracious me, they make me chilly now to look at them," said Mrs. Hewton, drawing the scarf closer to her bosom.

"'Tis rather pretty," yawned Willie. "Nice story to put the children to sleep with."

"Can't you believe anything, Willie? If you can't, at least don't destroy others' pleasure in what is beyond you."

"But how about taking care of themselves, Mrs. Redefer?" Willie went on, undisturbed by Mrs. Hewton's acerbity. "You don't expect us to swallow that, do you?"

"Patience, Willie, until I've finished, and then you may judge."

"Oh, lud, is there a sequel?" and Willie sank back among his cushions with a resigned air.

"I really never paid much attention to the story, myself," said Mrs. Redefer, "and kept the rubies in the safe, as I did my other jewels. But one night, on returning from a ball, dead tired, I threw them on the dressing-table with the rest of the trinkets I had worn, telling Betty to leave them till morning. When I awoke, the rubies were missing. Yes, actually, they had disappeared—dis-solved, apparently, in thin air."

"The cat or the parrot," mused Willie, under his breath.

"Whatever it was, we couldn't find them, though we tried every available means to do so."

"The next year we went to Europe. It was the year before the Exposition in Paris, and there we had an apartment that gave on the Place d'Iéna. From my windows I could look out on the Avenue du Trocadéro, in which the

constant going and coming of all sorts of strange peoples fascinated me. When I was in the house, I spent most of my time watching them.

"One day, as I was thus lazing in the embrasure, a group of exotics in outrageous tingling finery passed up the avenue, toward the Exposition grounds. No one could possibly tell how it happened, but, suddenly, the little party was in the middle of the street, tangled up with a pair of plunging horses attached to a smart victoria. In a moment, there was a crowd—one of those crowds that seem to come from nowhere, but are always on hand. The *sergent de ville* swung his baton right and left, and the gesticulating idlers added volubly to the confusion.

"On the impulse of the moment, I ran down-stairs and pushed into the crowd. A mussed-up bundle of tawdry finery lay on the asphalt, and from it protruded a peaked little face that was almost cleft by a wound from the forehead to the chin. Nothing was being done. I seized the muslin scarf she had about her shoulders, and bound it as tightly as I could around her forehead. Then I told the officer to carry her to my apartment. As he deposited the limp form on a couch in my room, I telephoned for my doctor.

"In the afternoon she woke to consciousness, and looked the gratitude of a helpless animal for my efforts to make her comfortable. Toward midnight she became restless. Her head turned from side to side, and she murmured in her own tongue. Suddenly, she opened her eyes wide and stared at me strangely. Then she thrust her hand into the bosom of her chemise, and, withdrawing it in feverish haste, she pressed into my hand a tiny packet, filthy as the street, and wound round and round with greasy thread. '*P' vous, p' vous,*' she whispered, in her inchoate French. Before the doctor came again she was dead.

"Several days later, I found the packet in a drawer, where I had dropped and forgotten it in the ex-

citement of the moment. I picked it up with the scissors, and tossed it into the waste-paper basket. On second thoughts, however, I picked it up again, clipped the grimy string, and unrolled the grimy paper. In it was one of my rubies."

"Oh, Mrs. Redefer, that is too—too good!" roared Willie.

"As you like," responded Mrs. Redefer. "But it is gospel, all the same. And, to go on, if you'll only hold your tongue——"

"I'm done—done brown," returned Willie, while an echo from Redefer on the terrace sounded very like, "Oh, fudge!"

"We went over to London for a few weeks in the Autumn," Mrs. Redefer continued, unmindful of the echo. "As we always do, we stayed at Hyde Park Corner, from which dear point of vantage I can run around to Lady Severdon's in Park Lane at almost any time, and unattended. She was in town then, and one evening, just after dinner, 'phoned me to go over and gossip a bit, as neither had anything on hand for the night. The bright chintzes of the cozy boudoir and her agreeable chatter beguiled the hours till midnight struck. I started in alarm at having let time so run by me, though I refused the proffered escort of one of the men. We American women are over-independent at times.

"As the street-door banged behind me, I noticed that a pall of fog had fallen over the city while I was dawdling beside Lady Severdon's fireside. I did not realize how dense it was, till I had reached the pavement and advanced a few steps. Then I saw that it was too thick to discern even the curb, though in the gloom ahead of me a circle of dull phosphorescence indicated the street-light at the corner.

"Dazed, I thought of going back, but in turning around I lost Lady Severdon's stoop. My fears seemed absurd, and I started toward the disk of light. But, almost instantly, I was arrested—frozen with fright by the sound of furious, whispering voices,

muffled in the fog, but seemingly close beside me.

"'Damn 'er, knife 'er if she won't give it to you,' one of them said, and, almost immediately, there was a faint scream smothered as by a hand on the mouth, I thought, and then a sickening thump, as of a body falling.

"'Got it?' said the voice again.

"'Yes, here it is,' whispered another. Then:

"'Cheese it, and git! some one's coming!'

"'Well, pull 'er out of the way!'

"There was a short scuffle, then deadly silence. The tension that held me, broke, and I made a rush for the light. I had nearly reached it when my foot slipped in some slimy, sticky substance. I stooped and divined, rather than saw, that I had stepped in a pool of blood, already half congealed.

"Fainting almost, I drew myself up quickly, and, as I did so, something at the edge of the dark stain flashed even in that uncertain light, and I put out my hand and picked up—my second ruby. Then I did what any other woman would have done—I yelled like an Indian till a policeman came out of the gloom and took me home."

Willie simply cleared his throat, and Redefer strolled farther off on the terrace.

"We got back to Paris in the midst of the Exposition festivities. I went to the ball at the Elysées Palace—the one given for the Shah, you know. As I went into the *salle des fêtes*, a man turned quickly toward the supper-room, and, as he did so, he slipped on the polished floor and fell backward against the corner of a brass-edged table. I was standing quite near, and, as his hand clutched the vacant air in an effort to save himself, I saw the blood-red flash of my third ruby on his finger. Strange, wasn't it?"

"But—but—what became of him? What dreadful thing—?" gasped Willie.

"Oh," said Mrs. Redefer, interrupting, and holding aside the curtain for Mrs. Hewton to enter, "he was Redefer, and I married him!"

DEAR-AND-LOST

O CONSTANT heart, belov'd, but dispossessed
 Of love, in youth!—for what dost thou repine?
 Unblest art thou? Nay, rather doubly blest!
 For now, till death, both love and youth are thine.
 Now henceforth, she, whom tyrant Fate denies
 Thy waking arms, with thee in dreams shall dwell—
 Untouched of Time and all undimmed her eyes,
 Save for the sorrows of thy last farewell.
 Now, eve by eve, for thee her lamp shall burn
 From every lattice. Oh, thrice happy thou!—
 No more to know of broken troth, or vow;
 And but the half of this sad truth to learn:
*New wine—old love—these two make heavy cheer;
 But dear-and-lost forevermore is dear.*

What though another hath the envied boon
 By day and night to look upon her face?
 He shall but witness—and, alas, how soon!—
 The mask of age her maiden bloom displace.
 But shrined in fancy, as she was to thee,
 In that last transport, so shall she remain;
 And thou to her as lusty May shalt be,
 When Winter long hath stol'n thee in his train.
 Oh, fair thy fortune, past the touch of scorn—
 The slips of chance—to live forever free,
 And wear thy rose but as a memory!—
 For only so mayest thou escape the thorn.
*Old wine—new love—make choice of these for cheer!
 But dear-and-lost forevermore is dear.*

WILLIAM YOUNG.



A GOOD REASON

“THEY call that particular Smith, over there, by the atrocious nickname of ‘Mug.’”
 “Well, he likes to have them do so.”
 “He does?”
 “Yes. His real name is Clarence Lysander Higginbotham Smith.”

A COMEDY OF LOVE

By Una Hudson

I HAVE often thought that I should like to know a real, live novelist—there is a question I would like to ask. I have observed that, in stories, people always read their letters at the breakfast-table—that is, when they don't have them in bed on a silver tray with their morning roll and coffee—and I wish to know how they manage it.

Now, in our town, a wise and beneficent government has so arranged that we—that is, the feminine part of us—get our mail half-way between breakfast and luncheon, or else we get it in the middle of the afternoon. And I should like to see my wife keep her letters for eighteen hours for the sake of reading them at the breakfast-table! In fact, I should like to see her keep them for even half an hour—it would be such an absolutely unique and unheard-of experience.

I am willing to admit that the present system of mail delivery has its advantages. For instance, it is possible to go to one's office in blissful ignorance of the contemplated visit of one's mother-in-law; and one does not have to remember all day that one's wife's aunt's second cousin fell down the cellar stairs and fractured her knee-cap. But it has also its disadvantages, for, by evening, the wife of one's bosom is apt to be in the effervescent state of a tightly corked bottle of champagne, and one's appearance is inevitably the signal for the withdrawal of the cork.

There are, fortunately, certain outward and visible signs whereby one is enabled to approximate the extent of the calamity, and, when my wife met

me at our front gate, with a letter in her hand, I knew the situation was one calling for all the tact and finesse at my command.

"Howard," she began, as soon as I was within hearing distance, "what do you think?"

Now, inasmuch as, where her affairs are concerned, I never permit myself to think, that was a wholly superfluous question. I made no attempt to answer it, and, indeed, I knew from experience that no answer was expected.

"Ruth writes," Barbara went on, vindictively twitching the letter from its envelope, "that she has postponed her visit to us for three weeks, but that Alberta will come on at once, and we may expect her to-morrow."

I was distinctly relieved. I had expected nothing less than an avalanche of poor relations, but Alberta—Alberta was the only daughter of Barbara's dearest friend. She was nineteen, presumably pretty, certainly charming as most young girls are, and I thought it would be decidedly pleasant to have her in the house, for I am fond of girls and we have no daughters of our own.

I failed to spot any calamity, but, undoubtedly, there was one, and I waited for Barbara to enlighten me.

"Of course, I shall love to have Alberta with us," she was saying, "but why couldn't Ruth come with her? It's such a great responsibility to look after some one else's daughter. She will be absolutely sure to fall in love with some one who is utterly impossible, and then what will Ruth say to me?"

I rather thought that Barbara was

borrowing trouble, but I wouldn't have said so for a good deal. Instead, I sympathized with her in a clumsy, masculine fashion that probably did not impose on her at all, and intimated that I was hungry and that possibly the dinner was growing cold.

When I came home the next night, I found Alberta established in the hammock on the front porch, and Barbara fussing over her in a way that would certainly have brought on nervous prostration had I been the victim of her solicitude. Alberta, however, seemed to enjoy it; still, she may not have—I have found that, where a woman is concerned, it is never safe to judge by appearances.

"It's Uncle Howard!" Alberta cried, as I came up the steps. "I know, because mama has his picture, and he looks exactly like it, only younger."

She got out of the hammock, and gave me her lips to kiss, and I fell an easy victim to her wiles. And with reason, for Alberta was very good to look upon, being a trifle below medium height, slenderly built, and very blond. She had big, appealing, blue eyes, small, clinging hands, and she wore a soft, frilly, blue frock that gave a glimpse of a round, white throat and very shapely arms.

She seemed a sensible young person, too, for when, at dinner, Barbara began making suggestions as to her entertainment, she begged us to take no trouble on her account. She would be quite content, she said, to spend her days with Aunt Barbara and her evenings with Uncle Howard.

"You know," she explained, with a most adorable smile, "mama has taught me to call you 'Auntie' and 'Uncle,' and I hope you will let me keep on doing it."

By the time dinner was over, we felt as though we had discovered a long-lost daughter, and I wished that I could adopt Alberta and keep her permanently in the family. But that, of course, was impossible, for a widowed mother might, not unnaturally, object to giving up her only daughter.

After dinner, Governor Allbright

dropped in, as he very often does, to smoke and spend the evening. Barbara is more than a little proud of our intimacy with the governor, but, to me, it seems simple and natural enough. But then I knew him when we were barefooted boys together—when he was plain "Bill Allbright" with freckles on his face and warts on his hands, and that, I suppose, somewhat influences the point of view. In the course of time, he shed the warts, outgrew the freckles, and became the "Honorable William H. Allbright." To me, however, he has always been, and always will remain, the same old "Bill." But I digress, and that, I am reliably informed, is, for a story-teller, the unpardonable sin.

Barbara, with an air that was distinctly proprietary, presented Alberta to the governor; and he, being a man of taste and discrimination, surrendered as promptly and unconditionally as I had.

That was the beginning, and before the evening was over it was easy to foresee the end. For Alberta, the minx, Alberta, who had declared she would be quite content with the society of Uncle Howard, flirted with the governor in the most open and audacious way. And he rose to her lure as does a trout to a particularly tempting fly. Really, such conduct in a man of his age was most reprehensible.

But worse was to follow, for the next morning, quite early, while we were at breakfast, in fact, there came a box from the florist's for Alberta. It was from the governor, of course, and was accompanied by a note inviting Barbara and Alberta to drive in the afternoon.

Alberta said he was "a perfect old dear," put her roses in Barbara's rose-jar, and went off to answer the note. But Barbara stared at me with a face grown positively rigid with apprehension.

"Oh," she wailed, "what am I to do? Who would have thought it? And at his age, too!"

I am afraid I said something about

"no fool like an old fool," and went off to my office very cross indeed. For Alberta was so busy with her roses and her note that she couldn't even take time to bid me good-bye.

The next morning, when I left the house, Barbara thrust a perfect sheaf of notes into my hands.

"Mail them," she ordered, tragically, "at once! I've invited every nice young man we know to call! Something must be done. He's old enough to be her father, and what will her mother say to me?"

I tried to comfort her with the assurance that, from a worldly point of view, Governor Albright was all that was desirable, but, when I spoke of money and position, Barbara silenced me, imperatively.

"He's *old*," she said, and her tone implied that age was the crime of crimes.

The young men came—a seemingly unending procession of them—and Alberta smiled on them all impartially, but refused to desert the governor. And the governor sent her bunches of flowers, and boxes of candy, and books, and magazines, and made an ass of himself generally. He all but lived at our house, and Barbara grew positively thin with anxiety.

"Oh, if only her mother would come!" was her ceaseless wail. And at last, after three weeks of incessant worry on Barbara's part, she came.

I do not feel myself equal to an adequate description of Mrs. Kinsale. It would require the facile tongue of a Frenchman to do her justice, and I know better than to get myself tangled up in the intricacies of the French language. Her coiffure was a marvelous work of art, and her gowns, Barbara said, were dreams. But it was her complexion and figure that chiefly excited my admiration. The first would certainly have made the fortune of some worthy person, could she have been induced to divulge the secret of where she procured it. And as for the second—I have seen ladies who affected the "straight front," but never, never

have I seen a front so mathematically straight as was Mrs. Kinsale's!

Mrs. Kinsale was a lady of resource and of action. Like a general, she surveyed the situation when Governor Albright made his regular evening call. And then she inaugurated a campaign that was sublime in its simplicity, and masterly in its effectiveness.

How it happened, neither Barbara nor I could have told, but, before the evening was over, it was Mrs. Kinsale who was singing the governor's favorite songs, and it was Mrs. Kinsale who sat in a shadowy corner and looked at prints and engravings with the governor. And when, finally, he took his departure, it was Mrs. Kinsale who followed him into the hall and murmured a sweetly spoken good night.

"He is a most charming man, your governor," she said to us, a moment later.

I never saw anything so obvious in all my life, and I wondered what Barbara's comment would be.

"Did you ever see anything like it?" she demanded, when at last we found ourselves alone in our own room. "And at her age, too!"

Then, after a pause, "Poor Alberta!" she said. And she kept on saying, "Poor Alberta!" at intervals, while she made her preparations for bed. "Poor Alberta!" was the last thing I heard before going to sleep, and, the next morning, as I struggled back to consciousness, "Poor Alberta!" came from Barbara's side of the bed.

"Why do you keep saying that?" I demanded, irritably.

"It's so perfectly terrible for her own mother to cut her out like that," Barbara said.

"Anyway," I retorted, sharply, "your responsibility is at an end. Now it is Alberta and her mother for it."

And again Barbara sighed, and began, "Poor—" But I covered my ears, and fled to my dressing-room.

That morning, the usual bunch of flowers came from the governor, but the accompanying card read, "Mrs.

Kinsale." And neither Barbara nor I dared look at Alberta.

In the evening, the governor and Mrs. Kinsale went to a concert, and Alberta complained of a headache, and retired to her room.

Barbara faced me with tragic eyes. "Oh," she whispered, "did you see the poor child's face when they went out together?"

But I had not seen Alberta's face, because I had been unable to nerve myself to look in her direction.

"We must do something! Oh, it's perfectly disgraceful!" Barbara cried, distractedly. "Get a man here to-morrow night to call on Alberta—the nicest man you know—two of them, if you can."

And I got one, the most sought-after man in town. But Alberta sat limp and white, one eye on her mother and the governor, and talked only in monosyllables.

After that night, the poor child kept to her room when the governor called, and steadily resisted all our well-meant efforts to amuse her. But, one night, she waylaid me on the stairs.

"They—they seem to like to be together," she began, timidly, pointing to the drawing-room, where, of course, her mother was entertaining the governor.

They certainly did seem to like to be together, but I did not propose to admit it.

"Don't you worry, my dear," I said, patting one of her little hands. "All-bright doesn't mean anything by it. He's—he's a bit fickle, you know."

"I never would have thought it," Alberta said. "He didn't, somehow, seem that kind of man."

"But he is," I said, decidedly. "I've known him ever since he was a boy, and he's as fickle as—as a weather-vane."

This was not strictly true, but I felt a bit savage, and didn't care how much I slandered him.

I had meant to comfort Alberta, but I seemed, somehow, to have failed. She kept on up the stairs dejectedly enough, and I hunted up Barbara, and

told her all about it. Her indignation knew no bounds.

"They're just breaking that poor child's heart," she declared, hotly. "Howard, why don't you tell the governor never, never to come here again?"

But this I refused to do. One should think several times before offending the governor of one's state—he has too many ways of getting back at one.

Things went from bad to worse. And then, at last, one evening after the governor had gone, Mrs. Kinsale came up and tapped on our door. Barbara went out, and they stood in the hall and whispered together for an interminable length of time. Then Barbara came back, and carefully closed the door.

"It has happened," she said, coming close to me and speaking in a tragic whisper. "They're engaged."

It was not entirely unexpected, but, none the less, I found myself with nothing to say except Barbara's "Poor Alberta!" And that, I thought, had been done to death; so I kept silence.

In the morning, Barbara refused to leave her bed.

"I'm ill," she said, "positively ill. I simply cannot endure to see that poor, dear child."

But, after breakfast, Alberta came to Barbara. Barbara told me about it afterward.

"I'm so sorry you're ill, Aunt Barbara," she said. "Do you feel well enough to hear a piece of news? Only think, mama is engaged to the governor!"

Then she began to laugh, hysterically, and Barbara just lay and stared at her, and couldn't think of a thing to say.

"Oh, it's just too good to be true," Alberta said, at last. "I have been so worried for fear she would marry some utterly impossible person who would just wreck her life. You can't think, Aunt Barbara, what a great responsibility an attractive mother is. Why, I've frightened away at least six un-

desirable men. And then, when I came here and met the governor, I knew he was just meant for mama, and I made up my mind that no matter what it cost me I would hold him till mama got here, and I did it. But you made it very hard for me, Aunty Barbara, when you invited in all those nice boys. It just wrung my heart to refuse their invitations for tennis and golf and rides and drives. But I had to do it, for I simply didn't dare to let the governor out of my sight. He's such an old dear—I don't see how he

has ever managed to live so long and escape matrimony.

"But now it's all settled, and at last I am free to do as I please. And, Aunty Barbara, do you think you can induce the boys to come back? That is, of course, when you're quite well again."

Barbara sat up among her pillows, and pulled Alberta down and kissed her.

"My dear," she said, "I'm well right now. And I think—yes, I am quite sure that we can get the boys back again."



HELD BACK

I WOULD find my way through the dark to-night
 Out to the open, out to the air,
 If I could be certain of finding there
 These slender grasses, that blur my sight
 As I lie out here in the faint, grave light
 Of a dead moon risen to haunt the night.

I would find my way through the dark to-night,
 Fling off the burden, and wander free,
 If I could but carry this book with me
 That I hold, unread, in the late twilight
 With its poems, like roses shut in from sight
 Whose scent, light escaping, pervades the night.

I would find my way through the dark to-night,
 Find it for once, find it for all,
 If I could be certain to hold in thrall
 And keep forever, as now, in sight
 Her beautiful eyes, her eyes of light!
 But we bring no memories through the night.

FANNY KEMBLE JOHNSON.



THE SIZE OF IT

LITTLE ELMER (*with the bulging forehead*)—Papa, what is conservatism?
 PROFESSOR BROADHEAD—Merely a polite name for stupidity, my son.

THE FAUN

THE Faun that haunts my fountain,
 Within the garden-close,
 Ah, not to us of human kind
 His mocking face he shows,
 But neighbor to the lily, he,
 And comrade of the rose.

The Faun that haunts my fountain—
 I hear his song all day—
 A melody made whimsical,
 A careless note and gay,
 Mocking the bird that dips and flings
 His host a roundelay.

The Faun that haunts my fountain
 Makes secret of what whim
 Led him from woods Ionian,
 Through unknown paths and dim,
 To make an English garden
 The chosen home of him.

The Faun that haunts my fountain—
 But I alone have guessed
 The reason of his coming,
 The meaning of his quest:
 He seeks a vanished dryad,
 A nymph Pan loved the best.

O Faun within my fountain,
 Last of your lovely race,
 I know what makes my garden-close
 Your fragrant dwelling place:
 I saw who leaned above your brink
 One noon to see her face.

O Faun within my fountain,
 I watch you day by day,
 I know your pagan ecstasy
 When Lydia comes your way—
 What time you stretch white arms to her,
 And kiss her lips with spray.

JOHN WINWOOD.



EAT, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we diet.

THE VICTIM OF A RESCUE

By Elliott Flower

EDWARD BANFORD felt that he had only a few minutes to live. He was far from being an expert swimmer, and he had ventured too far from shore. Still, he did not entirely lose his head. Occasionally, when his weakening strokes permitted him to sink low enough to get water into his mouth and nose, he made spasmodic efforts that still further exhausted his little remaining strength, but, for the most part, he acted wisely. Twice he had tried floating to rest himself, but had gained little. He realized that he had not tried it soon enough, for he was breathing so hard he could not keep his mouth closed. A close approach to strangling left him weaker than before. There was nothing for him to do but to swim slowly and doggedly on.

"But I'll never make it," he thought. "It's all up with me."

Then he noticed a commotion on the beach. People were pointing, and some of them were gesticulating excitedly. Evidently, his plight was understood at last. One man was rushing along the beach in the direction of a boat.

"Too far," thought Banford. "If I could hold out until that boat got here, I could swim ashore."

His mind was clear; he reasoned clearly; he knew his limitations. He was doing the best that was possible, but it was not enough. He kept in mind the advice given for the guidance of people in such circumstances, and he followed it as closely as his weary, panting body would let him.

"But they'll never reach me," he

thought, and became almost resigned to his fate.

The excitement on the beach seemed to him to increase suddenly. They were pointing in a different direction now, and some of them were fairly jumping up and down. Faintly, over the water he heard the enthusiastic exclamation: "Lord! look at her go!"

He glanced to his right, and discovered the reason for all this. A girl was swimming toward him. She was coming, it seemed to him, with a speed that no swimmer ever had attained before, and he was not in a position to exaggerate speed, either. She was using a strong, overhand stroke that is tiring, but effective for short distances at high speed—a stroke often used by expert masculine swimmers, but seldom essayed by a woman. Even in that moment, Banford could not restrain a gasp of astonishment. He knew her, but only by sight. She had a reputation as a swimmer, and he now recalled that she was the only one left in the water when he had attempted his foolhardy exploit.

"Rescued by a girl?" he thought. "How humiliating!"

That such a thought should come to him at such a time, afterward struck him as peculiar, but he always conceded that it was no more than a flashing fancy. He was quite ready to put up with whatever humiliation might be necessary.

"Don't try to grab me," she said, as she came near.

"I've got a little sense," he gasped back at her.

As she came within reach, he put

out one hand and rested it, gently, on her shoulder. That was enough to keep him afloat.

"Why, you *have* sense, haven't you?" she commented.

This made him angry, but he was in no condition to discuss the matter with her, so he said nothing.

The girl struck out for the shore, fairly towing him along. He paddled a little with one hand, but he had to admit that it did not help much. Her vigorous strokes carried them both through the water, although she made no attempt at speed now.

The crowd on the beach tried to give three cheers for her, but she was scampering away to the bath-house before the cheering had fairly begun. He tried to thank her, but she broke in with,

"You know the proper thing to do, don't you?"

"Yes," he faltered.

"Well, then, do it! I'll see you some other time."

As he followed wearily after her, it was very forcibly impressed upon him that she was a pretty and shapely girl. He had noticed this when he had seen her on the beach before, but never with the particularity that he did now.

"Anything we can do for you, old man?" asked one of his friends.

"Yes," he replied, for he thought he knew "the proper thing to do;" "you can run up to the hotel and get me the biggest glass of whiskey that's to be had there. I think I need it."

That put a little life into him, and he was soon dressed.

Then he began to have his troubles. Here was a romance that was really worth discussing—quite the reverse of the ordinary one. If he had rescued her, it would have been good enough, but this was better.

"By thunder, old man," commented one of his friends, "if I were sure it would come out the same way, I'd try it myself. Of course, you will marry her."

"Shut up!" exclaimed Banford, irritably. Banford was really troubled to know what he ought to do and say

to show his appreciation of her act. It was going to be very awkward when he next met her.

"You say she told you not to grab her," suggested another of his friends, "but, of course, that was while she was in the water. A man who has been rescued by a pretty girl has some rights afterward."

They were sitting in what was known as the club-room of the hotel. Some one had once suggested that it was called the club-room because so many of the men who assembled there took club soda with their brandy, and that is as good a reason as any that can be advanced. The club-room was connected with the bar-room, and there was a dark-skinned waiter who passed back and forth.

Banford left them and their bantering very soon, and went out on the broad veranda, where he was instantly appropriated by a pretty little matron, who made it a point to be jolly and friendly with all the young men.

"Oh, isn't it delightful!" she exclaimed. "And so romantic! Of course, you'll marry her."

"Does a rescue make that imperative?" he asked.

"Certainly," she answered. "It would spoil the whole thing if you didn't."

"But are not *we* to be considered?" he inquired.

"Not *you*," she answered. "You're entitled to no consideration whatever. You simply owe it to her. You owe your life to her, don't you?"

"Ye-es."

"Then you must give your life to her, as a matter of course."

"But perhaps she doesn't want it," he pleaded.

"Doesn't want it!" repeated the matron, in surprise. "My dear boy, you don't know girls. No girl could resist such a romance as that. If she is rescued by a man, there is a sense of gratitude that is strong; but, if she rescues a man, there is a sense of possession that is simply irresistible. He is hers. She secured him at great per-

sonal risk. Oh, it makes a captivating romance! A girl couldn't help loving a man under those circumstances. And Lucille Deane is a lovely girl."

"Yes," he said, resignedly, "she is a lovely girl, but I didn't suppose——"

"That's because you're so unsophisticated," she broke in. "Every young man ought to have a married woman friend, with whom he can talk freely and from whom he can get advice. Then there wouldn't be so many mistakes made."

He was just turning away when two girls approached.

"Oh, here he is now!" cried one of them, mischievously. Then to Banford: "We've just been congratulating Miss Deane."

His mind reverted instantly to the rescue. There certainly was nothing but her heroism upon which she could be congratulated as yet, and he was the rescued one.

"I think I should have the congratulations," he remarked.

"Oh, certainly," was the reply. "Both of you, for that matter. And we all hope you'll be very happy together."

"I—I didn't mean that," he protested, as they passed on.

"But we do," came back the laughing reply.

"You see!" exclaimed the matron, nodding wisely. "You're too faint-hearted."

He walked slowly the length of the veranda; he felt that all were watching him. Indeed, he overheard some of the comments.

"Wasn't she lucky, though?" was one. "You know how she has admired him, and now everything comes out just right."

"I wish I could have a romance like that," was another.

"Oh, he can't do anything else," was a third, evidently given in answer to some question.

Then one—a piquant, roguish girl—addressed him directly.

"No use looking," she said. "She isn't here."

"Who?" he asked.

"Who!" she repeated. "Why, there's only one She, isn't there? And she's too modest to meet you in front of us all."

"Wait until it's moonlight," put in another. "You ought not to be so impatient. This is no time to finish out a romance."

He hastily retreated to the club-room, deciding that he could better stand the railery there.

"All settled?" inquired one of the men.

"It seems to be," he retorted, gloomily.

"You don't seem to be very happy about it. What's the matter? Is she going to make you wait two or three months while she gets her trousseau ready?"

Banford was desperate. In his state of mind, he felt that it would be nothing short of a calamity if he should meet his rescuer. He was anxious to do the proper thing, but he did not want to make a fool of himself. He had a due sense of gratitude, but he was uncertain what was necessary for a full expression of it. In this dilemma, he beckoned to Philip Newell to follow him, and then slipped away to a corner of the billiard-room.

"Phil," he said, when the latter had joined him, "this is frightfully awkward. It's bad enough to be rescued by a girl—makes a man feel so sort of small, you know—but it's worse to know what to do."

"Oh, there's only one thing to do, my boy," returned Newell, without a moment's hesitation.

"Cut it! cut it!" broke in Banford, sharply. "Now, if I had been rescued by a professional life-saver," he went on, "I could give him a sum of money, and it would be all over; if I had been rescued by some other masculine bather, I could buy him a meerschaum pipe or something, and feel that I had squared matters. But a girl! Hang it all, Phil, I don't know what to do! Some girls won't accept presents from men, except, perhaps, flowers. I did think of sending her a cart-load of flowers, for a fellow doesn't want the

impression to get abroad that he considers his life a cheap thing. But aside from the question of a present, what am I to say? Just put yourself in my place. 'It was so kind of you, Miss Deane!' How does that sound? Absurd, doesn't it? 'I can't find words to express my thanks!' Idiotic, isn't it? And yet a fellow doesn't want to be melodramatic, or he'll make a fool of himself."

Newell was thoughtful for a moment. Then his face lighted up.

"Why not be sentimental?" he asked. "Girls always like that, according to my experience, and this is just the chance for it. No melodrama, no conventional phrases—just sentiment. And that will lead nicely up to——"

"Now, see here, Phil!" exclaimed Banford, "are you guying me, or do you honestly think that a rescue has to end in a marriage?"

"Oh, that depends on circumstances, of course," replied Newell. "It's according to the rules of romance, but the rules are never binding on the rescuer. With the rescued, it's different. You've heard of girls who felt that they had no right to refuse the man who had saved them?"

"I believe I've read something of that sort."

"Well, that's your fix. If she doesn't want you, she needn't take you; but, if she does want you, it would be ungenerous and ungrateful in you to deprive her of yourself. Why, according to maritime law, you're hers now, for you were a derelict when she picked you up. And, according to all other law, you are hers, also, for she practically made you what you are."

"Made me!"

"Certainly. To all intents and purposes you were nothing when she reached you—so far as the rest of the world, including yourself, was concerned, you had ceased to exist. She, and she alone, made a living man of you, and it naturally follows that that man is hers, if she wants him."

"But I don't believe she does," urged Banford, plaintively.

"That's where you're wrong, my boy," returned Newell, reassuringly. "The girls tell me she has expressed admiration for you several times. You know you are a good deal of an athlete in all except swimming."

"But—but I'm already engaged, Phil," protested Banford, in desperation.

"Oh, that makes it serious, doesn't it?" returned Newell.

"I should think it did!" exclaimed Banford, feelingly.

"Well, let's consider the matter more in detail. Of course, you are hers just the same, but perhaps we can find a way to secure your release. Did she say anything when you got ashore?"

"Why, no—that is, nothing of any consequence. She asked me if I knew the proper thing to do, but——"

"That settles it, my boy," announced Newell, decidedly. "You're elected. There's only one interpretation to be put on 'the proper thing to do.' Ask anybody."

Banford went forth, rebellious. His last remark was, "I'll be hanged if I'll do it, anyway!" which brought to the face of Newell a look of disappointment and reproach.

Even if there had been no previous engagement, Banford felt that it would be a mistake for a man to marry a girl who had thus rescued him. How could he expect to be the head of his own household? Would she not be the dominating personage by virtue of her exploit? Could he ever hope to be looked up to as a protector? Where would the trust and confidence and willowy reliance come in?

"How did she get her husband?" people would ask.

"Why, she fished him out of the water," would be the reply.

It was a hard enough blow to his masculine dignity to be rescued by a girl—it would be insufferable to have her always before him to remind him of her strength and his weakness. Besides, he had been engaged to Ethel Cheney only two days, and it was preposterous to think he was going to break that engagement for any such

absurd reason. Miss Deane was a remarkably pretty girl, and, doubtless, very delightful in other ways, but Ethel was the one he wished. Then it suddenly occurred to him that Ethel probably had heard some of the rumors and the comments, and would naturally be disturbed. She was not stopping at the same hotel, but stories travel fast.

He found Ethel alone, with tears in her eyes.

"Oh, Edward, isn't this dreadful?" she asked. "To think that you should be lost!"

"But I'm not lost," he protested.

"To me you are," she answered, tearfully. "You were lost to us all—you were gone—when she got you. But it's very, very hard!"

"Confound it, Ethel!" he cried, "I don't intend to give you up!"

"You're not giving me up," she answered. "You were lost to me in the water. Oh, the reasoning is very clear—too clear. All that you are now you owe to her. Any one can see that you wouldn't be anybody at all, if it hadn't been for her, so no one else has any claim on you. And you must be honorable, Edward. I never could love and respect your memory otherwise."

"By what right am I hers?" he demanded, fiercely.

"By—by right of discovery, I suppose," she answered. "I should feel like a thief, if I took you from her now, and—and I wouldn't have a lover who wasn't honorable, even at a sacrifice. You must go to her, Edward. No one else can have any possible claim to you, and they all say she expects it."

Now, indeed, the matter was settled. It was worse than awkward not to have title to one's own person and life, but Ethel insisted that, as a matter of ethics, he must offer himself to Miss Deane. He must do what was expected, and she cited several romances to show that, after a rescue, there was always a wedding. Aside from the ethics of the case, it was unwritten law. Then, too, it was the only way of showing proper gratitude. Ethel was strong on romances.

"If left to myself," he said, "I would violate all precedent, but for your sake I will do this."

"It breaks my heart," she answered, "but I would not have you otherwise than true to every obligation of life."

He went back to his hotel, and awaited his opportunity. Others were waiting, too, but he was determined they should not witness the scene. If he sent his card up, she would come down to the veranda or the parlor, and there would be many spectators on hand. So he waited until they tired of watching, and then he found her alone in an obscure corner of the veranda.

"I wonder," he said to himself, "if I ought to begin by calling her Lucille, or work up to that, gradually. It's mighty hard to know what's expected of a fellow."

However, he decided to be slightly more formal, even at the risk of disappointing her.

"Miss Deane," he said.

She looked up, quickly, and blushed. It seemed to him she knew what was coming.

"Pardon me for addressing you without an introduction," he added.

"Oh, no apology is necessary," she answered, smiling. "I believe I spoke to you first."

"In the water?"

"In the water."

There was a moment of embarrassing silence. In a general way, he knew his lesson, but he had forgotten the details of it.

"Miss Deane," he blurted out, at last, "you saved my life."

"Oh, you were doing all right," she answered, carelessly, "only, you didn't begin to reserve your strength soon enough. It was just an error of judgment."

There was another embarrassing silence.

"Miss Deane," he exclaimed, abruptly, "will you be my wife?"

She looked up at him with such an expression of astonishment that he was instantly convinced he had not done the thing right. He was standing, and

he ought to be on one knee at least, especially as she was seated.

"Don't do that, please," she said, as he made an awkward attempt to rectify his error. "I—I thought the girls were joking when they insisted—Really, this is very painful, Mr. Banford."

"It is," he answered.

She gave him a searching glance.

"Is this a joke?" she demanded.

"Do you see anything excruciatingly funny in the situation?" he asked, resentfully.

"No," she replied, "and I believe you are too much of a gentleman to treat so serious a subject lightly. For it is serious—very serious."

"It is," he said, with solemn emphasis.

Again she gave him a searching glance, but his face reassured her. It was not the face of a humorist—not then.

"It is painful to me," she began, "to decline——"

"What!"

"It is painful to me to decline——"

"Will you say that again?"

"Mr. Banford, are you out of your head?" she demanded, angrily.

"No, but I shall be in a minute!" he exclaimed, with a sudden change of manner. "If you'll just say that again to make sure—Am I to understand that you refuse me?"

"Refuse you!" she cried. "I wouldn't marry you, if you were the last man on earth!"

"Good! good! great!" he exclaimed.

"You're insulting, sir!"

"I don't mean to be—honest, I don't — but — but there's another girl. You see, the circumstances seemed to——"

"Oh!" she interrupted, beginning to understand the situation, "so there's another girl! Well, just to set your mind at rest, let me tell you there's also another man."

Banford was himself again; he was all smiles and good humor.

"Would this other man permit you to accept a few roses from me?" he asked.

"Under the circumstances, I think he would," she replied, "if you will kindly permit me to extend my congratulations to the other girl."

"I'll bring her here," said Banford, as he rushed away.

He hunted up a florist, and gave him a card with a name and address on it.

"Send some roses," he ordered.

"How many?" asked the florist.

"How many have you got?" asked Banford.

"About eight dozen," said the florist.

"Send them all," ordered Banford.

Then he sought out Ethel Cheney, and explained the situation to her.

"Why, the mean, unappreciative, blind, foolish, insulting thing!" exclaimed Ethel. "I—I'd just like to hug her!"

"So would I!" cried Banford.

But he afterward apologized for that.



ONE SYMPTOM

MR. SCRAPPINGTON (*in the midst of his reading*)—Well! well! Here is a prognostication, by a well-known college president, that American white men are slowly but surely becoming red men.

MRS. SCRAPPINGTON—Pshaw! it isn't always correct to judge a man by his nose.

L'HONNÊTE ENLÈVEMENT

Par Henry Fèvre

D'ALLEMAGNE, sur les bords du vieux Rhin, festonné et féodal, c'est de là que je t'écris, ma chère Berthe, et je vois d'ici ta surprise, en reconnaissant sur l'enveloppe les pattes de mouche de mon écriture, à côté du cachet de la poste... "A Cologne? Si loin, tout d'un coup!... Mais que fait-elle là, à quoi pense-t-elle? te demandes-tu dans ton effarement ingénu devant une pareille frasque de ton amie. Que veut dire ce voyage et une telle étourderie de sa part? S'absenter, partie, envolée, dans un coup de tête, et seule, je l'espère bien, mais quand même... Quelle idée, quelle imprudence! Et seule? Est-ce possible? Une jeune femme, et dans ce pays classique de vagabondages amoureux et d'odyssees galantes! Et cela, au moment le plus délicat d'une situation déjà épineuse, alors que ton amie plaide en instance de séparation contre son mari, que le jugement va être prononcé, que tout lui commandait la réserve la plus élémentaire, d'éviter la moindre apparence équivoque et d'être là surtout! Voilà le moment qu'elle choisit pour s'en aller, et avec quels airs d'escapade, comme si elle cherchait à mettre exprès les torts de son côté, à compromettre à plaisir sa cause en si bonne voie, sa réputation surtout, si précieusement ménagée jusque-là!... De quoi faire prononcer contre elle, l'innocente, la séparation demandée. Partie, à la veille du jugement! Et seule, avec ses enfants sans doute, mais quelle idée, quelle faute!"

Seule? Pas même, et que sera-ce de

ton étonnement, ma chère Berthe, en apprenant que ce voyage inexplicable, si impromptu et incongru, l'est encore plus que tu ne l'imagines et ne présentes rien d'autrement solitaire... que, si je n'ai même pas mes enfants, laissés bien tranquilles chez leur grand'mère, en Normandie, je suis cependant accompagnée, et par qui? Tiens-toi, crispe-toi... par un amant; oui, le plus tendre, le plus caressant, le plus passionné des amants, et que je suis heureuse, enfin, effrontément, effrénément, à scandaliser ton âme blanche, faire lever au ciel tes yeux purs et rougir tes joues opalines... Quel esclandre, hein? et j'entends d'ici tes soupirs: "La malheureuse, l'étourdie, la folle, au moment d'être délivrée, quand l'enquête ordonnée par le tribunal concluait toute en sa faveur, que les torts du mari éclataient!" Tandis que je devine d'ici les bonnes langues: "Quelle sainte nitouche, hein! cette petite madame X..., et quelle témérité de plaider contre son époux pour quelques écarts conjugaux! elle à qui on aurait donné le bon Dieu sans confession, et qui n'a même pas eu le courage d'attendre quelques jours le prononcé du jugement pour prendre l'escampette avec le premier venu!... De quoi laisser soupçonner bien des choses dans son passé de fausse hermine et réhabiliter le mari, bien vengé à présent."

Et c'est bien, en effet, ce qui te surprendra le plus, ma chère Berthe, dans cette frasque de ton amie, la première de ce genre, tu en conviendras, cette possibilité d'un amour supposé, clandestin, bien invraisemblable, bien ex-

traordinaire, et en contradiction avec les sentiments les plus chers que tu m'as toujours connus, l'affection invariable que, malgré tout, et en dépit de ses torts, je gardais toujours à mon mari, le serment que je m'étais fait de ne jamais même me remarier, de lui rester fidèle, quoique séparée... Oui, toi qui m'as vue dans la douleur et dans les larmes de cette séparation, demandée enfin et seulement quand il n'y avait plus eu moyen de faire autrement, après tant de pardons inutiles de ma part et le sacrifice fait si souvent de ma dignité d'épouse... une séparation cruelle pour moi surtout, que je ne demandais qu'à mon cœur et mon corps défendant, contre un mari charmant, trop charmant, hélas! pour bien d'autres, chéri quoique détesté, et sans ignorer d'avance combien le monstre me manquerait et comme je serais la première à souffrir; car mes enfants n'étaient pas assez grands pour remplacer dans mon cœur, trop vide désormais, l'affection d'un mari, que j'aimais toujours, tu le sais bien, et ne pensant qu'à lui, hélas! Hélas! non... Car je suis trop heureuse, mon cœur débordé, je me suis assez humiliée et il est grand temps que je te dise... Comment aussi n'as-tu pas déjà deviné que si je suis partie si délibérément avec un amoureux, un amant... un amant, moi! si j'ai commis cette étourderie, cette faute, cet esclandre, ce scandale, ce ne pouvait être qu'avec lui, Lucien?

Eh! oui! mon mari, mon époux, furieux dès le premier jour d'une séparation dont lui-même n'avait jamais voulu et se défendant comme un beau diable, tu te rappelles, devant le tribunal. Il fallut le voir alors exhiber toutes mes anciennes lettres d'amour, et il y en avait de tendres, pour prouver notre bonne entente, désolé de ma décision presque autant que moi, si c'était possible, moi qui tenais bon pourtant, quoi qu'il m'en coûtât! Ayant trop pardonné, je connaissais trop l'enjôleur avec ses caresses, toujours amoureux, mais léger, incapable après les larmes les plus chaudes, de s'amender, et volant en papillon au

premier caprice. De sorte qu'une fois partie, courageusement arrachée, j'avais refusé dorénavant de le revoir, le connaissant et connaissant trop ma faiblesse, héroïque à décliner tout réconciliation, toute rencontre même, au point de le désespérer, paraît-il. Car, entêté malgré tout à ne pas me perdre, et devant ma décision irrévocable, l'enquête du tribunal ayant tourné à sa défaveur, et à la veille du jugement de rupture, il en arrivait, dans son dépit, dans son amour, j'espère, je crois, je veux le croire, aux dernières extrémités... Jusqu'à m'enlever, tu m'entends? car ce voyage n'a même pas été libre de ma part, au moins pour commencer... m'enlever, oui, comme dans les romans, et pas en automobile, mais à la façon classique, en voiture, et de force, oui, de force...

Capable de tout, comme tu vois, et bien monstre décidément!

Oui, un matin, comme je sortais de chez mon avocat précisément, croyant tout terminé, ayant encore dans l'oreille la grosse voix de prétoire de M^e Guérard:

— Demain, sans faute, le tribunal doit prononcer... Vous pouvez considérer comme obtenue la séparation... Bien qu'entre nous le divorce eût été préférable.

Mais tu connais là-dessus mes sentiments religieux... Et comme alors je m'en retournais à pied, tentée par le joli matin d'été, tout gai de soleil, de foule élégante et de voitures fleuries, dans ce quartier pimpant de la Madeleine, croyant bien, en moi-même, tout "consommé," ainsi qu'il est dit dans la Passion, et triste, triste, à en pleurer déjà, bien que brave toujours, et résignée, héroïquement! voilà que, tout à coup, dans la rue, j'aperçois Lucien, en face de moi.

Et, tout d'abord, je me détourne, toute pâle:

— Charlotte! fait-il, suppliant.

— Non, non, vous savez bien que tout est fini, que je ne veux plus vous voir, vous parler...

Oh! mais brave, tu n'imagines pas comme je l'étais, presque un peu en colère même sur le moment et résolue

toujours. Quand je me sens saisir par le bras :

— Alors, tant pis!... Montez quand même, nous causerons mieux en voiture.

— Mais je ne veux pas, je...

Sans que j'aie eu le temps d'en dire plus, poussée dans le coupé qui attendait là, par Lucien et par deux grands laquais qu'il avait avec lui... un peu rudement même, à me faire peur, je l'avoue, et ne sachant pas trop que penser provisoirement, sans le loisir de me rendre compte... Car, au galop! Nous sommes déjà partis, nous filons, nous allons, dans un vertige, un tourbillon, très loin, ma foi, je ne sais où...

Tandis que Lucien, l'enjôleur, ah! oui, l'enjôleur...

Jusqu'en Allemagne, comme tu vois, où la voiture changée en route pour l'express, nous voilà à présent, laissant le tribunal se débrouiller... et heureuse, quant à moi, tout oublié de nouveau et effacé, et heureuse, oui!

Bien que je te voie sourire.

Pour combien de temps? demanderas-tu. Le temps que m'a juré Lucien... Un temps bien long, très long... toujours... il faudra bien. Car le moyen de nous séparer, après m'être laissé enlever?... Tu comprends, maintenant, je suis trop compromise avec lui.



IN SABINE MEADOWS

I READ Catullus, till the page I scanned
 Grew indistinct, and, half-asleep, I dreamed
 That you and I lived long ago. We seemed
 In Sabine meadows, walking hand in hand,
 A boy and girl; with sun-browned faces fanned
 By languid breezes when the salt wind streamed
 From off the blue Tyrrhenian sea, that gleamed
 Far westward. Surely, that was Love's own land.

Ah! How you laughed to see the clumsy bees
 Shoulder their way among the chalices
 Of purple thyme. And, when I kissed your hair,
 You ran off pouting, yet came back again.
 It seemed so real: the sky, the soft, warm air!
 And yet—could I have loved you better then?

WILLIAM COFFIN DORNIN, JR.



INTERESTED

"I WONDER if Penman's book will fill a long-felt want."
 "I hope so. He promised to pay me something on account if it does."

April 1904

FIDDLE-DE-DEE

THE Irishman, Dutchman and Frenchman in me
 Are always contending—their purposes cross;
 Wherever I journey there journey the three,
 Each claiming predominant right to be boss
 Of the big job of Life; they cannot agree,
 This Irishman, Dutchman and Frenchman in me.

Says the Dutchman: "Get up once and harvest the hay
 While yet the sun shines—would you be but a tramp
 For the rest of your life? There will come a wet day;
 Put something aside." The Hibernian scamp,
 Says, tugging my sleeve, with a wink of his eye:
 "Be 'asy—ye're Irish—ye'll always be dhry."

"*Par ici*," the Frenchman calls, leading the way,
 We walk where the South Wind is cradling Spring.
 We paint pleasant pictures the long Summer day,
 And gather primroses, and loiter and sing.
 And so, we do nothing but fiddle-de-dee,
 This Irishman, Dutchman and Frenchman in me.

CY WARMAN.



FORTUNATE

"PRETTY lively bull movement," observed the friend of the man who managed to get over the fence without being gored.
 "Very," said the other. "I'm glad I wasn't cornered."



EXPENSIVE TO SIT

"DO you know, uncle," said young Mr. Manhattan, who was showing the Stock Exchange to his relative from Schoharie, "that as much as eighty thousand dollars has been paid for seats in this exchange?"
 "Then I don't wonder that most of 'em stand," replied the old man.

A QUESTION

By Lilian Quiller-Couch

WHAT would a decent-minded girl have answered?

"Put on a cloak and come out," said Gervase.

I did it.

A girl-acquaintance said one night, two years and a half before, that, if Gervase Carrol asked me to stand on my head in Trafalgar square, I should do it. That was the night my eyes were opened. That was the remark which opened them.

Now I went with him along the balcony, into the hall, and, putting on a cloak, I followed him. We left the company with which we had dined, and the larger company which had joined the party later. He did not defer to me. He did not ask, "Shall we stroll this way, or that?" I did not suggest.

We left the blossomy, scented garden striped in moonlight, and strolled out into the quiet road; and my thoughts went as a mill-race, and I walked on steadily—fierce, apathetic, fiery, cool, according to the side, inside or outside, to which I turned my attention—as I walked beside that insensate man.

It was Oxford, in June. Those who know Oxford in June need no description; those who do not know it do not want that now. But the pathway was striped with motionless leaf shadows, and I noticed that the pale-blue cloak that hid my white silk gown looked mist-colored.

"Grand night," said Gervase.

"Beautiful," I answered.

Vague as an idiot I seemed. And all the time the mill-race in my head was swirling. More than two years ago we

parted, I and this man. At least twenty years we had known each other, I and this man. Just a couple of dull children to each other—I suppose; then a dull boy and girl—I suppose. I don't remember any feeling, but just taking him as a matter of course, doing all the things he demanded of me, and gradually and unconsciously doing them with more pleasure.

We turned toward the city.

"Electric light rather hobnobs with the moon," said Gervase.

"Rather well," I replied.

He never thought of anything but his expeditions, and his explorations, and his rifles, and which condensed beef would keep best in the worst climate, and so forth. All self, self, self! as if I cared——!

"They haven't spoilt this road, quite," said Gervase.

"Not quite," I replied.

But I *had* cared! I loved him, loved him! I knew it all those weeks—two years and more ago. Nobody thought of me as caring, except just as a dull sister-sort-of-person might care. Gervase's father and mother were as much accustomed to me as Gervase was—they being my godfather and godmother, and having me there so often. How I suffered the night I found it out—the night of the Trafalgar-square remark—the night I knew he was going to Central Africa, and knew he was as bloodless as a log—about the heart, at any rate. Where most men had hearts, he had a globe, with blue spaces of undiscovered land most prominent.

We walked on past the parks, past Keble College.

"I like that scent of limes," said Gervase.

"So do I," I replied; then wished I'd said I didn't.

More than two years ago! More than two years since Dick Carrol, Gervase's brother, brought back Cecil Hepson to spend the vacation with him. Cecil Hepson! Good heaven, was ever any life like mine! Cecil Hepson. *Two years!* Two years can make the man who has implored you to be his wife—who has kissed you till you pitied him with passionate pain even if almost *because* you did not love him—like that—two years can make all that a cold dream.

"I always like this corner—Sheldonian, Ashmolean and all that, seems so academic," said Gervase.

"Yes, it does," I replied.

A cold, slow thought blocked the swirl. "This is how we get on together, Gervase and I. What man *could* think of life with a first-steps-to-conversation woman like this? What a married life!" And still on we walked, and like a mill-race the thoughts began again, "I love him, I love him, this great callous brute beside me." I laughed to myself once as we walked in the shadow of a house, and into the swirl was caught the idea, "What would he think—he and I walking along so nonchalantly side by side; what would he feel, and look, and say if, turning for a moment, he glimpsed the tempestuous heart just inside the ribs so near him?" Cecil, Cecil Hepson! What was, what is, the riddle of his behavior? Cecil, who had outraged his parents' sense of right in some way I never learned of; Cecil, discontented, chafing, thinking every one wrong rather than himself; Cecil, who had fallen in love with me, who had found comfort in my interest, who had implored me to become engaged to him, and he would go abroad and win everything for me, name, fame, wealth. He *had* to go abroad, poor Cecil; his parents insisted—Cecil, who was fretful, and high-handed in some ways, but so loving to me; Cecil, whom I cruelly encouraged in my own pain, with no thought of his, with a mad

hope of raising some feeling in the insensate lump of a man now pacing along beside me; Cecil, who kissed me and then went away—waving his hat—into silence; Cecil, whose people I did not know; Cecil, about whom I dared not inquire because, oh, because—Cecil was not thought much of. Poor Cecil; my lover, and nobody guessed; the boy—man—I was bound to by my solemn promise even as I walked along by the gates of Baliol this night beside Gervase. And I did care for him, poor boy! my heart went out to him—only differently.

"We might drop in at the theatre," said Gervase.

"I should like it," I replied.

More than a mile we had walked on this scented June night. The air was as new milk to one's cheeks; the moon and the electric light bathed the quieter streets in a soft glow. My feet were aching in my high-heeled, evening shoes. Gervase would not think of that, of course. The only footwear Gervase would be interested in would be something mud-colored with spikes in it. He probably took for granted that I was walking in something mud-colored with spikes in it now.

The theatre was not very full. We sat in the dress-circle. The play was "The Last of the Dandies." I shall never forget it—the little I saw of it. Gervase sat beside me, leaning forward, his strong, brown fingers knotting and unknotting with ingenious knots—doubtless knots of immense value in an expedition to Central Africa—the blue ribbons of my cloak now lying between us. My silly, dejected lips smiled a little as I thought of the big, brilliantly lighted house beyond the little city, from which we had strolled away. They would forgive us, of course. They were easy-going—Gervase's father and mother; but it was a cool thing to do—Gervase, the lion, and I, the guest, arrived only this afternoon after an absence of two years.

When the drop-scene fell, the orchestra began to play one of Mendelssohn's "Lieder," of all things in the world school-girlish. I thought to-night I

had never heard anything so inexpressibly sad and beautiful. Cecil, my lover! What did it mean, this terrifying silence that had made me a half-mad creature for two years? It all came back with new torment, here in this old city again. The unreality of everything. What was it all? What was I? Were other girls' lives like this?—outwardly, a healthy, pulsating body; inwardly, one great, dreading, terrifying questioning. Was my lover dead? Was he tired of me? Was he ever alive? Did I ever know him, see him, feel his kisses?

Perhaps some elaborate form of knot stirred thoughts in Gervase; that is the sort of thing that would. With his voice slow, in accord with the music, tearing at my heart, as the voice of the hero or heroine accords with the slow music in a melodrama, he leaned a little nearer, and said, casually:

"Do you remember that fellow Dick brought home with him—the Vac. before I went away? A whining, quarrelsome sort of fellow—Hepson, he was called."

The nerves of my face stiffened. I felt myself grow cold, and drained white.

"Oh, yes," I replied, seemingly languidly cordial toward this effort of conversation, inviting, carelessly, further confidence. Such a hypocrite I had become!

"Poor beggar was hanged," said Gervase, conversationally. "Strung up to a tree by natives, just after he landed."

"Why! What!" I tried to move my tongue to frame the words, but it was big and stiff; it might have been white, like my face, from the feeling of it. But I made my lips move; and Gervase either wasn't interested sufficiently to listen, or thought the orchestra drowned my question. Probably I looked a question.

"Trying on some of his silly, ignorant tricks, I suppose. Got telling lies or showing too much knife, or something. Anyhow, they caught him where he stood, and just hanged him to the nearest tree. We heard it months afterward. Poor beggar!"

The music went sobbing on. The footlights first swayed before my eyes, then leaped up into the air, then dropped down again. For some unmeasured moments the seas of the world roared in my ears, till they gave place to the cry of a human being in torture. Then all the lights went out, and I saw blackness. But immediately they were all ablaze again, and in their right places; and my hearing, preternaturally clear, heard the last unutterably sad notes of the "Song Without Words." Then the drop-scene rolled up quite slowly and correctly, and I watched Lady Blessington's sorrow, and saw Count D'Orsay die.

When the curtain fell, my mind, which had been seemingly in a trance for a while, woke and moved again, very slowly; there was one thought in it. "Cecil, my poor Cecil! oh, my poor boy!"

Gervase's callous, brown fingers tied the bow of my cloak, when we rose to go—doubtless it was ingeniously knotted; my own fingers were clumsy.

"Good to get out in the air," said Gervase.

"Yes," said I.

Had we spoken a hundred and fifty words since we started on our moonlight stroll? I wanted wildly to strike the great shoulders of this unfeeling animal, but I was weak with a revulsion of remorseful love for that poor, slaughtered boy.

We went the way we had come, along the Broad, and, turning the corner, passed up by Wadham College and under the limes.

"Mary," said Gervase.

"Gervase," I replied.

My hearing seemed wrong again, for Gervase's voice was strange, and so was mine when I answered him. The scent of the limes was exquisite, but they were trees. Cecil was hanged on a tree.

"Mary, I love you!" said Gervase. Certainly his voice was strange. So were his words. I felt that I was falling back, back through two years—to Cecil—it was Cecil's voice. But Gervase's hand had dragged mine from be-

neath my cloak. "Mary," his voice was deep and vibrant as a bell, "I loved you—suddenly one day—it was out there—in the very midst of a skirmish—when I ought to have been thinking of nothing but a cursed, treacherous beast, too low for good powder and shot. I thought of you till my idiot hand jogged under my rifle, and my heart hammered with joy and pain, and a stolen bullet flattened my flask that was covering it." He stopped and faced me. "I came straight home as fast as I could lay foot. I never paused. I wanted to shout it out when I saw you come into the room this evening. I brought you out to tell you, and I've been just niggling round every other thing instead. But I brought you out to tell you, right enough, and—I've told you. I love you. Will you marry

me? I must know! I will know to-night."

I gripped the hand that had dragged mine and was still holding it, gripped it, because I was falling, till I wonder how he bore it. He had done nothing in his life to help me before this moment; now he should hold me back to this night and my senses.

What does a heart hidden inside the body do? Does it bleed when it is torn? Does it glow as a furnace when it is kindled? Would I marry Gervase? Till half an hour ago, I had been engaged to Cecil, I thought. Cecil was just murdered. Cecil loved me. Gervase, who had always been dead, was living. I loved Gervase.

What answer would a decent-minded girl give that night?



THE DREAM

AND, lo! my spirit had returned
To the old place that it loved best;
Light voices laughed, and candles burned,
Friend greeted friend, and Love was guest.

It looked to find the empty chair,
Or yet the voice by memory stilled,
With Yesterday a presence there—
Alas, there was no place unfilled.

Life is this moment's shuttle, plied
Whilst thou and I are face to face—
Its silver thread, blown on the tide,
Lost ere to-morrow's grace!

VIRGINIA WOODWARD CLOUD.



EXACT

MRS. KNICKER—Was your new gown a good fit?

MRS. BOCKER—Lovely. Jack's bank account shows just seventy-three cents left.

A PSEUDO-MADONNA

By Eleanor Talbot Kinkaid

THE impression one retained after wandering through the ancient home of the Flournoys, with its dim ancestral portraits, its carved rosewood and mahogany, its faded satin-damask, and beautiful antique silver, was like that produced by some quaint old melody, sadly sweet, quaveringly played upon the flute. Low echoes of bygone days softly sounded from every room.

Like many of the spacious mansions built early in the nineteenth century by that hospitable class who first brought to Kentucky from Virginia and other Southern states the luxurious instincts of the British landowner, the old house now stood in the midst of its neglected plantation, a depressing monument to the decline of a social system that has forever passed.

The stately structure, whose walls had resounded with the mirth, and sheltered the sorrows, of four successive generations, seemed, together with the family fortunes, to be tottering to a fall; and Ichabod was written above the doorway. For everything belonging to the Flournoys, even including the Flournoys themselves, gave melancholy hint of departed glory—everything except Edith.

Edith was the eldest of ten motherless children, and thereby raised by mere priority of birth to an enforced position of command. Perhaps she was by inherent strength better fitted than most for the trials thus entailed. But, if she met the situation with an admirable tact, it was also with an inscrutable reserve. No one ever knew her views upon the subject of the cares of motherhood unrelieved by the joys

of maternity; her tendency was not toward analysis, and her nature did not crave sympathy—the sympathy which thrives upon mutual confidence and confession.

Serene, resolute, possessed of that fine, spiritual order of beauty which always suggests a nimbus, at twenty-nine Edith was at the height of the maturity toward which she had been developing with a deliberateness that was scarcely justified by the existence of three marriageable sisters close on her heels.

However, from these young persons, less richly endowed in the way of physical attraction, and, in consequence, far more fortunate—escaping because of such deficiency the ambitious expectation of friends—there had come not a murmur of complaint. Edith was their hope, their pride, and they manifested a patient willingness to wait until the brilliant marriage anticipated for her should not only shed a rosy charm upon them, but also open up a future of glorious Summer upon the Winter of their previous discontent.

Offers of marriage she had repeatedly had, they felt sure, for there was about her a sweet and magnetic calm that seemed to prove equally alluring in the case of the youthful lover with all life's possibilities ahead, the elderly admirer with a thought for the quiet fireside, and the dejected widower with a troublesome family to be reared. By the last in particular she was constantly besieged, the grace and dignity with which she moved along the difficult pathway of her present conditions suggesting a moral equipoise that would doubtless prove even more delightfully

apparent in another and more intimate relation. But the evident failure thus far of every aspirant to satisfy the requirements of either her circle or herself was becoming serious.

Perhaps there was, therefore, a modicum of selfish interest mingled with the impulse of sisterly devotion which promptly decided the three girls that Edith, by all means, should be the one to accept the invitation which, quite unexpectedly, fluttered one day into their midst—an invitation extended to one of the four to spend the Summer with a relative at Newport. It was the first opportunity of any import that had ever come to them; and when the letter, collectively addressed, arrived, it fell first into the hands of the younger girls, just as they were returning, rosy and radiant and inclined to be a little boisterous, from an early-morning bicycle ride in the sweet country air.

There was one paragraph in particular in the letter which produced a profound impression. It ran:

"I shall be only too happy to have any one of you, for I have always wished to show some little kindness to poor dear Isabel's children; but if the rest decide to give way to Edith, she will find an earnest admirer awaiting her when she comes—some one who has heard much of my beautiful young Kentucky cousin, and who has been ready to lay his millions at her feet from the moment I showed him her photograph. Perhaps I ought to add that it would be hardly possible for her to fall in love with *his* photograph, so I refrain from sending it. But you know, my dears, a sensible woman can always rise above the mere absence of good looks in a man—provided, of course, there are compensations. Is Edith too saintly to marry a score of millions—I hear there are really scores of millions, but we will limit ourselves to one to be on the safe side—when unaccompanied by personal charm? If so, perhaps she had better stay at home and enjoy her piety, sending one of the younger girls in her stead. I can only add, however, that since your poor papa has been so unfortunate, it is high time that one of you was getting off his hands; and it is always safe to begin with the eldest."

It was after a hurried conference, somewhat noisy in its procedure, but entirely harmonious, that they broke, eager, anxious, yet animated with a lively hope, into Edith's bed-chamber.

It was still quite early, and they found her in dressing-gown and slippers, before her mirror, in the act of combing her long, chestnut hair.

The comb did not cease immediately after their abrupt entrance, and the girls stood a moment watching the graceful figure, conscious of a dampening to their zeal. They felt all at once timid and abashed.

Presently, Edith slowly turned, betraying no surprise. For the briefest possible space, a shadow seemed to lurk about her features; but, when one looked again, there was only the sweet and gentle light in her eyes. A faintly perceptible smile was on her lips as she came forward a step or two, and there was a fine courtesy in her manner, strangely at variance with the noisy familiarity of their ways. She glanced from one to another of the flushed faces before her, saying nothing.

The girls had grouped themselves about the room—Katherine on Edith's pretty, curtained bed, with its delicately carved rosewood posts, and high canopy lined with quilted crimson satin; Alice on the hearth-rug, and Grace, the youngest, in the arm-chair. They had the air of persons about to enter upon an important debate in which there was the prospect of resistance, if not of point-blank refusal. Katherine held the letter.

In spite of a fresh complexion and an abundance of waving, red-brown hair which she wore rather gracefully in a loose coil piled high upon her head, she was not a pretty girl, her features being too large and her form too angular for beauty. However, her face expressed a certain astuteness which was lacking in the features of the younger girls, who were plump and pretty and commonplace, and altogether too ignorant of their limitations to be disturbed by their existence. It was Katherine, therefore, who was the eldest of the three, and five years younger than Edith, who kept the others mindful of Edith's superior claims. She sat on the bed, dangling her feet, and twirling the letter meditatively in her hands.

"Edith," she broke forth, at length, rather abruptly, "it has been moved and seconded, and the motion has enthusiastically passed, that you gather together such articles of apparel as you now possess, and a few others which you don't possess, but which shall soon be added to your wardrobe—donated, my dear, in a worthy cause—my new pink silk, for instance, and Alice's blue flannel, and Grace's white serge—what a mercy that the scissors have never cut into them!—and betake yourself as soon as possible to Cousin Harriet Pendleton's, at Newport, where you are most cordially invited to spend the Summer. And you may thank your stars you've got a Cousin Harriet Pendleton and three adoring sisters to speed you on your matrimonial way."

The smile about the delicate corners of Edith's mouth gave way to an expression difficult to fathom. She threw a hasty glance toward the dainty envelope which Katherine was gaily tossing, and hesitated.

"You have a letter?" she said. "Let me see it, please. I don't quite understand."

As she took the missive into her slender, beautiful hands, she turned away and walked very quietly toward the window; but, when her eyes fell upon the first few sentences, she gave an embarrassed start.

"But it is not for me!" she cried, in odd constraint.

Her glance ran thoughtfully down each sparsely written page, not missing a word, absorbing tone, contents, everything—the loose, characterless chirography, the smart, of-the-world-worldly impress, the underlying philosophy of life and ethics, as well as the lucrative opportunity unblushingly displayed. Then she came slowly into the centre of the room, pushing back the rolling collar of her pale-gray dressing-gown with fingers that trembled a little as they tugged at the lace about the throat.

"As the invitation is extended to any one of us, I think Katherine should be the one to accept," she said, finally, in her low, rich voice. She was breath-

ing quickly, and the color in her cheeks had deepened.

"Katherine? Katherine, indeed!" cried Alice and Grace, in indignant protest.

Edith's glance rested critically and impartially upon each of the three girls, as if weighing for the first time their respective claims to admiring notice.

"Of course it can be any one of you," she replied, coming suddenly to herself with a guilty smile. "I was only thinking—Cousin Harriet is rather conventional in little matters. I thought perhaps Katherine——"

"Oh, say no more; Alice and I understand that we are not 'in it,'" put in Grace, with pert good humor. "You are afraid that our august relative may have fault to find with our uncouth provincialism, and you prefer that Katherine shall maintain the family dignity. Well, we are just as solicitous for the family dignity as you are, and, with all due respect to Katherine, we give our vote for you." Then she added, with a shade of malice: "It is time one of us was getting off, and, as Cousin Harriet has remarked, it is always safe to begin with the eldest."

Edith was still standing. Her eyes rested a moment longer upon Alice's and Grace's dumpy figures and foolish little faces, and then returned to Katherine, who offered no response. Presently, she drew her dressing-gown closer about her, and sank, with a little shiver, into the nearest chair. She looked wearied, and it seemed that a sudden hardness had crept into her eyes.

"The mortgage, Edith—think of the mortgage, and poor papa the father of ten, and not one of us married yet."

Katherine's laughing, but none the less serious, words were like a challenge.

Edith looked quickly away. She was toying nervously with a slim little band with a ruby setting, on her left hand. It was an odd, childish little ring, and of small worth; and the girls had often speculated about its history—without, however, finding a clue. But they knew that Edith valued it as she did nothing else belonging to her.

There was a long silence, during which Alice yawned audibly, and Katherine proceeded to re-read the letter, wondering vaguely, in case of Edith's dereliction, if it would at all do to send Grace.

"Since we don't seem to be coming to a conclusion very fast, and as I am hungry enough to eat a whole South-down mutton, all by my little self, suppose we adjourn for breakfast?" suggested Alice, at length, rising and making for the door.

"What shall you say to Cousin Harriet, Edith?" asked Katherine, lingering a moment after the others had gone.

She had been a good deal mystified by Edith's manner. Had her reluctance been only a fine bit of deliberate acting, after all? It was not always easy to understand the delicate intricacies of her sister's nature. She recalled the brilliant, eager glow in Edith's cheeks after reading the letter, the wild look that flashed for an instant into the gray eyes while suggesting that the invitation was not offered exclusively to her, and the unwonted excitement her whole being betrayed, in spite of her great effort to be calm. Nothing had escaped the watchful eyes of the girl.

"What will you say, Edith?" she asked again.

Edith had moved over to the dressing-table. She turned quickly, and again there was a sudden glitter in the heavily-fringed gray eyes.

"I shall write that I am happy to accept," she said.

Involuntarily, Katherine's glance turned toward the shapely hand still holding the letter. The ruby ring was gone.

II

EDITH did not belong to the order of woman that delights to write letters. In the main, her communications were few; and they were often subtle and elusive, and almost invariably brief. And, before a letter came, the girls had ample time to recover from the

effects of the effort they had put forth in assisting her in her hurried preparations, and in grappling with the difficulties of a situation rendered especially trying on account of slenderness of means. It is true that she had written at once to her father announcing her safe arrival, and the cordial welcome she had received; and, in closing, she had sent an affectionate message to her household, appended with evident warmth. But a letter, *the* letter, written exclusively to them, and telling the one thing they were particularly eager to know, the sisters continued impatiently to await.

However, at last, there came one day to Katherine a pale-gray missive bearing in lozenge form the interesting devices of the Flournoy shield—emblem of ancient distinction to her race which Edith silently and persistently employed, in spite of Katherine's fixed democratic disapproval of its use.

The girl tore open the letter with nervous haste, and her glance ran anxiously down the page. A moment afterward, in deep disgust, she was about to toss the unsatisfactory note aside, when her eyes fell upon the words, added, as if on second thought, in one corner:

"Tell Grace and Alice that I have met the multi-millionaire. He is short and fat, red-faced, red-haired, and wholly given over to equine—not feminine—adoration."

That was all. But Katherine thought it quite enough. She held the letter for some moments in deep meditation. Then she went straightway to her room, and with characteristic directness, wrote:

"Are you perfectly sure that he has a red face? I don't so much mind about the hair—some of the most charming people I know have hair the color of carrots, and freckles besides. But a red face is not an ornament of grace, and I wish he didn't have it. As for his fondness for horses—well, you must admit that some very nice people of our acquaintance have a predilection in the same direction. However, if I were in your place, I should find conversation rather difficult along his line, and I should feel that far too much was expected of me. Bless me, if I could call the name of a single celebrated four-footed beast that ever flourished in this famous clime!—leaving out

Longfellow and Nancy Hanks; and I suspect that, but for the historic association in other ways, I should not remember them. I hope you will tell him that we have never been allowed to go to the races since we were born. Knowing that you are a Kentuckian of the Kentuckians, and from the notorious Bluegrass region—I don't mean noted—his expression doubtless would be something to see.

"I mustn't forget to tell you that things seem to be going from bad to worse with the house of Flournoy, these days. Do you know that last week, quite unexpectedly, papa was forced to advertise our ancestral acres for sale? Trouble with the creditors, trouble with the banks—trouble everywhere! Of course, the crops have failed; they always do when you are in a bad way and depend upon them to bring you through. And so, if the old place is not sold previously, by private purchase, it is to be put up and sold—shades of illustrious forebears!—at public auction about the middle of September next! I haven't the remotest idea what is to become of us, and poor papa is simply bowed with grief.

"What do the people at Newport think of you, Saint Cecilia, Santa Clara? Do they appreciate your nun-like, madonna-like cast of countenance as they should?"

"Yours despairingly,

"KATHERINE."

She was a good deal mystified by Edith's reply. There was something beseeching, almost humble in its tone; and, temporarily, the relation of the two in point of age, seemed oddly to be reversed. But to Katherine's surprise and gratification, there was no hint of the immediate return she had feared she might occasion as one of the possible results of her rash letter. On the contrary, there was only the briefest reference to the unstable condition of things at home—whether from excess, or lack of feeling it was difficult to conclude. Edith finally told her that she had decided, upon earnest invitation, to prolong her visit until October, and ended with a message to her father, in which there was a glow of tenderness and pity that seemed suddenly to shed a warmth over the entire page.

After that, her letters were even more impersonal and less frequent than before; and, toward the end of her visit they ceased altogether, not even the melancholy information that the beloved old homestead had finally found

an acceptable purchaser enlisting a response.

Her return was abrupt—provokingly sudden, thought the girls, who would have preferred a longer time than was allowed by the brief announcement of her prospective home-coming in which to accustom themselves to their disappointment with regard to the evident failure of her visit.

But perhaps the old negro coachman, who alone came to meet her at the station on the day of her arrival, and whose white hairs and long service absolved a certain familiarity of speech, gave the clearest revelation she had yet received of what it means to be looked to in the case of an emergency as a sole-surviving hope.

"Well, young mistis, what you done foh yo'se'f?" he demanded, with a sly wink, as he stood holding wide the door of his ancient, ramshackle coach, and displaying by repeated bows and waves of the hand that indescribable deference of the old Southern darkey who has never ceased to be a slave—and a gentleman, "what you done foh yo'se'f?" And when Edith, smiling, shook her head, her eyes faltering a little under his searching gaze, "Things is gone powerful hard wid us," he essayed; "powerful hard tubbe sho!" he suddenly added, as he turned away with crestfallen mien, and began to climb to his seat on the box.

Edith was not a little shocked by the changes which the past four months had wrought both in her people and in the old place—by that air of complete dilapidation over everything animate and inanimate which so touchingly betrays the final surrender, and, above all, by the hopeless look in her father's eyes. After the first excitement of the meeting was over, she recalled that her sisters' greeting had been a trifle constrained, if not actually cold. But outwardly she took no notice of this—though she gave a slight start when Katherine, wheeling a great chair in front of the fire, remarked with bitter jest: "Here you may sit like Marius amidst the ruins of Carthage, while I

go and see if Aunt Hannah has a morsel for us to eat."

Edith sank wearily into the chair. Then she slowly turned her glance toward the girl's retreating form, and her lips parted in a faint, inscrutable smile.

That same look was on her face when she came down dressed for dinner an hour later, and left it only when her eyes chanced to rest upon her father's wearied countenance and bowed form.

During the meal, she was conscious that an odd, furtive sort of observation, the result of an attitude of secret disapprobation, was being directed toward her; and she saw that the remoteness which had always existed between herself and the other members of her household had been only accentuated by her absence. But, later in the evening, when she sat combing her hair before the light wood fire which had been kindled in her bed-chamber, the night being chill, the three girls, with something of their old familiarity, bounded into the room.

"Edith," said Katherine, calmly, after they were seated, "I have known one or two women in my life who have impressed me as strangely lacking in a sense of humor; I have yet to know the woman wholly devoid of curiosity. You have not asked a single question."

Edith paused. The brush dropped into her lap, and, pushing back the heavy hair from about her face, she turned and quietly looked her interrogator in the eyes. "That is true," she admitted, softly; "I have not asked a single question."

There was a shade of defiance in the manner of the younger girl when she spoke again.

"As for us," she continued, "we are dying to know a hundred things about you; can it be possible that you have nothing to ask about us? Is it nothing to you—nothing"—there was an angry sob in the youthful voice—"that the beautiful old place had to be sold; that papa, in his old age, has had to see everything swept away from him; that he is completely crushed under his misfortunes?"

Edith's eyes were fixed on the blazing wood fire. For a moment she was silent; then, without turning her head, she responded in a tone so low as to be barely audible.

"Yes," she said, softly, "it is something to me—it is everything."

"Then you might at least say a word or two," put in Grace, flippantly; "any old thing would do." She was sitting on a low stool near the fire, a newspaper, which she had been idly scanning, spread out before her. "Here is something about the man who bought the place," she remarked, a moment later; "his name is Smiles, Mr. Joseph Augustus Smiles—certainly the smiles are all with him, in this case—and it seems that he is not a youth to fortune and to fame unknown; he has a few comfortable dollars over and above what he paid to papa—only fifty or sixty millions or so. Here's his picture. Take a look at him?"

Edith shook her head.

"This is our first introduction," continued Grace, still studying the paper; "he was too great a swell to come himself, so he sent his agent. Perhaps he was afraid that, if papa once got a look at him, he would forbid the sale of our aristocratic acres to one so hopelessly plebeian and horrid. There is quite a lengthy sketch of him here, copied from one of the Eastern papers. Oh!"

Her glance had been running in a desultory fashion down the column, but all at once she paused and leaned toward the blaze, a comic look of interest depicted upon her little round face.

"It seems he really is something of a swell, after all," she cried, "in his own vulgar way, of course. This thing says he owns a 'palatial residence' in New York, and a Summer home at Newport; that he has a yacht; that he entertains a great deal—all with that terrible pudgy nose and short neck! Do take a look at him, Edith. You may not be entirely familiar with the bulldog type."

"Thank you, no, dear."

Something in the tone of the low

voice smote oddly upon Katherine's ears, more sensitive than her sisters' to detect the finer shades of feeling. Edith was sitting in a deep chair, somewhat in shadow, her form, in its loose white dressing-gown, having something of the repose and dignity of a statue. Katherine turned and looked sharply toward the quiet figure; and then it was she saw that some mysterious alteration had taken place during the past four months in the fine features, and that where there had been once a sweet serenity there was now only an adamantine calm.

Edith's long, white, ringless hands lay very still in her lap, and her whole being was as motionless as if it had lost all power of action. There were dark circles under the gray eyes. And, as Katherine sat staring blankly at her, a change took place in the light-hearted younger girl, also, which, as by some swift intuition, seemed suddenly to thrust her far beyond the experience of her simple life into a broader understanding than she had ever known.

Suddenly, into the haze of thoughtless kindness in which she had heretofore lived, there broke the clear dawn of a complete and startling awakening—an awakening to sympathy, to sorrow, and to life; and a kind of fearful pity began to stir her troubled breast. A sense of something pending was upon her, as she sat gazing steadfastly into her sister's white face. Presently, Edith's lowered eyes were lifted mutely to hers, and she checked an involuntary cry.

It was a relief that at the same moment there was a rueful little exclamation from the hearth-rug; and Alice, who had joined the small person with the paper, broke in with the words:

"Now, I call that shabby! Listen to this." And, snatching the paper into her own hands, she read:

"However, it is believed by the intimate friends of Mr. Smiles that the handsome old Kentucky estate he has but recently purchased is soon to be graced by the presence of one who may with special fitness be described as to the manner born. Owing to

the objection which still obtains among most Southern women to the announcement of an engagement until just before the marriage is about to take place, nothing, as yet, has been officially stated upon this most agreeable subject; but Mr. Smiles's devoted attentions to a certain charming young lady from Kentucky whom he met at Newport last Summer, and the subsequent conquering-hero look that continues to adorn his genial countenance, have given rise to much interesting speculation among the acquaintances of this most popular prince of the turf."

Alice read the flimsy notice with something of a flourish, lending a sarcastic inflection to the cheapness of the style. But at the last sentence she paused; and all at once she threw down the paper, and a look of bewildered surprise began to creep into her heedless, childish eyes. She turned suddenly pale.

"Edith," said she, very slowly, an undefined suspicion gaining upon her, "if he was at Newport all last Summer, and if he has really managed to make himself as conspicuous as this sketch of him seems to imply, you could scarcely have escaped seeing him, at least, even if you did not meet him. Is he—" somehow the words seemed to stick in her throat, and she glanced helplessly from one to another of her sisters—"is he Cousin Harriet Pendleton's multi-millionaire?"

Edith had risen, and was now standing with one arm resting on the mantel.

"Yes," she said, very quietly, "he is."

"And the girl he is engaged to—is she really anybody? Did you meet her, too?" It was Grace who put the questions, giving a furtive glance toward the mirror. Katherine was strangely silent.

"Yes," said Edith again, "I met her, too; I thought that I already knew her, but I was mistaken; my acquaintance dates from last Summer."

"But why on earth did you let her cut you out, Edith?" again demanded Grace, in flippant jest. "I have been wont to think of you as quite invincible. I am sure," with a coquettish toss of the head, "I should never have

surrendered so easily. Don't you think he would have liked my style? Tell us something about her. In what part of Kentucky does she live?"

"There isn't very much to tell." Edith's eyes were fixed in a kind of cold surprise upon Katherine's pitiful, quivering face. "There is never very much to tell of such women—the women who sell themselves for a price," she continued, calmly; "the whole story seems to be told in that one act. However, this woman impressed me as being a person who, if left to her own inclinations, would have preferred right to wrong. Most women do. She was simply a victim of circumstance, that is all. I have her latest photograph. Will you let me show it to you?"

There was something mocking in the icy, well-modulated tones. She crossed the room softly, with a swift, stag-like movement, searched a moment in her trunk, and then, with a strange smile on her lips, she handed forth the picture, looking down upon the three heads huddled together in the firelight.

There was a long silence. It was the picture of a woman sitting against a dark, curtained background, unconventionally gowned in soft draperies, and posed a good deal after the portraits of the old masters; and it seemed

as if an impression, rather than a distinct likeness, were meant to be conveyed by the drooping form and down-cast eyes, for there was a moment's hesitation before there came a startled expletive from the girls, and a sudden scrambling to their feet.

"Edith—oh, *Edith!*" cried Grace and Alice, aghast.

There was an interval of horrible constraint. Then Katherine took the picture into her hands. She was not a student, but it is difficult to live in a house where there are books everywhere, and not occasionally dip into one; and at this moment some lines from Burns's "Vision" kept singing in her throbbing brain:

"But yet the light that led astray
Was light from heaven."

She was trembling visibly now, and there were tears in her eyes.

"It is a good deal like Edith," she whispered, huskily, at length. "But I should never take it to be the likeness of any ordinary woman. It suggests the picture of a saint—a madonna——"

There was a short, stifled cry, and Edith put forth her hand.

"A pseudo-madonna," she said, quickly.



RESIGNATION

WHEN Autumn mists are low and wide
Across the fields of corn,
A little ghost at eventide
Goes wandering, forlorn—
The shadow of my Joy, that died
Or ever it was born.

When Spring has blest the barren slope
With sacred ministry,
I dare not walk where violets ope
And wind-flowers wait for me,
For that is where God hides the Hope
Whose face I must not see.

MABEL EARLE.

THE USELESS TEARS

By Zoe Anderson-Norris

SHE met him on the street. With one consent they stopped and spoke, saying how fine the day was and that it had been some time since they had seen each other, and thinking—he:

"She looks thinner and older since I left her. Tears, I suppose. Nothing ages a woman so soon as tears. It was a pity, but how could she expect me to remain longer in chains?"

And she:

"He looks hungry!"

By-and-bye, "Will you come in here and have something to eat with me?" she asked.

He followed her up the steps of the little French restaurant quickly and shamelessly, and they seated themselves within at a table among some palms. A waiter hastened forward.

She tendered him the menu.

"Order what you like," said she.

"This is reversing things," he laughed, with an air of bravado meant for the waiter.

"You used to treat me," she remembered, gently, "before we were married."

"But after!"

She waived the question.

"Give your order!" she said. "The man waits."

He gave his order. The waiter disappeared.

"Are you eating nothing?" he asked.

"I have had my dinner," she replied.

"I eat regularly now."

"Since we are no longer living together."

"It is not I who said it."

He was silent, looking at the tablecloth. It had been one of his laugh-

ing complaints of her to his friends that she insisted upon eating regularly—his chief reason, he said, for leaving her.

"What are you doing now?" he asked, presently, regarding her once more, and noting the purplish shadow beneath her eyes that still had the effect of giving them black and fathomless depths.

"I have got back to my old work of modeling clay. It keeps me alive. I have made a success of a statuette. I have had many orders."

"What is the statuette?"

"A love with feet of clay."

He thought:

"She never forgets me. The idea of me follows her into her work."

Aloud, he said:

"It is significant."

Again she waived the question.

"And you?" she queried.

"Mine is the old, precarious life you know so well, that of a free-lance newspaper man — money to-day and penniless to-morrow. Twenty dollars coming to you and no car-fare."

"With more industry there might be more money coming," she suggested, noting in her turn the not too clean collar and the unshaven face.

He shrugged impatient shoulders.

"It is what you always claimed," he declared, and he remembered how that had served to irritate him.

The waiter brought the dinner. There was no more room for conversation. He fell to voraciously, she watching him, sad to the heart that one who had been so near to her should suffer hunger.

At last he pushed his plate aside, and the waiter cleared the table.

"Will you have a demi-tasse?" she inquired, "and a cigar?"

He beamed upon her.

"You must be coining money," he purred. "Maybe you could loan a fellow a five?" This, when the waiter was out of hearing, gone for the demi-tasse.

She looked hard at him out of her deep, sad eyes in the endeavor to study him, to find out what manner of man he was. He had left her penniless and broken-hearted, friends had nursed her back to life, and given her her clay to comfort her, and he could accept the loan of a five at her hands!

Careful of his feelings, of his pride, she slipped a crisp bill across the table to him before the waiter could return; but there was a look of such intense weariness on her face that he said to himself:

"She has aged more than I thought. How she must have loved me! How she must still love me!"

He lolled back, comfortably, prepared to enjoy the aroma of his cigar.

"You have had all you wish?" she asked, politely.

"Everything," answered he.

"Then do you mind smoking your cigar as you walk? I feel the need of the air."

"Not at all."

With the same care for his pride, she counted out money for the dinner and tip, and slipped it to him. He paid the bill with the manner of one accustomed to handle much money, at which she smiled feebly, as if suddenly grown very tired.

In the street, she said, more politely still:

"I must leave you here."

"I thought," he demurred, "that perhaps we would walk a little way together." For he had counted upon paying her for the treat with the pleasure of his society.

"I have some work to do," she explained. "I must say good night."

"Good night," said he, raising his hat, and thinking:

"Poor thing! How fond she still is of me! But how it has aged her to shed so many tears! Really, I ought to go back to her. If she makes much more money on that statuette, it may be that I will."

"Good night," said she, and thought, her eyes on the slouch of his retreating figure:

"How useless those tears were! It was the hand of God that took him from me."



THE MONSTER

HE rose at seven, did this sire,
 And first he roundly punched the fire;
 The breakfast then he kicked about;
 He scratched a match, and put it out;
 He clinched his teeth on a cigar,
 And struck a gait, and beat a car;
 He killed an ad. for lack of wit;
 He at a mining venture bit;
 He cut a bore acquaintance dead;
 He gouged a customer, 'tis said;
 Blew up a clerk in his employ,
 And sat upon an errand boy;
 And yet this man of rabid act
 A harmless grocer seems, in fact!

EDWIN L. SABIN.